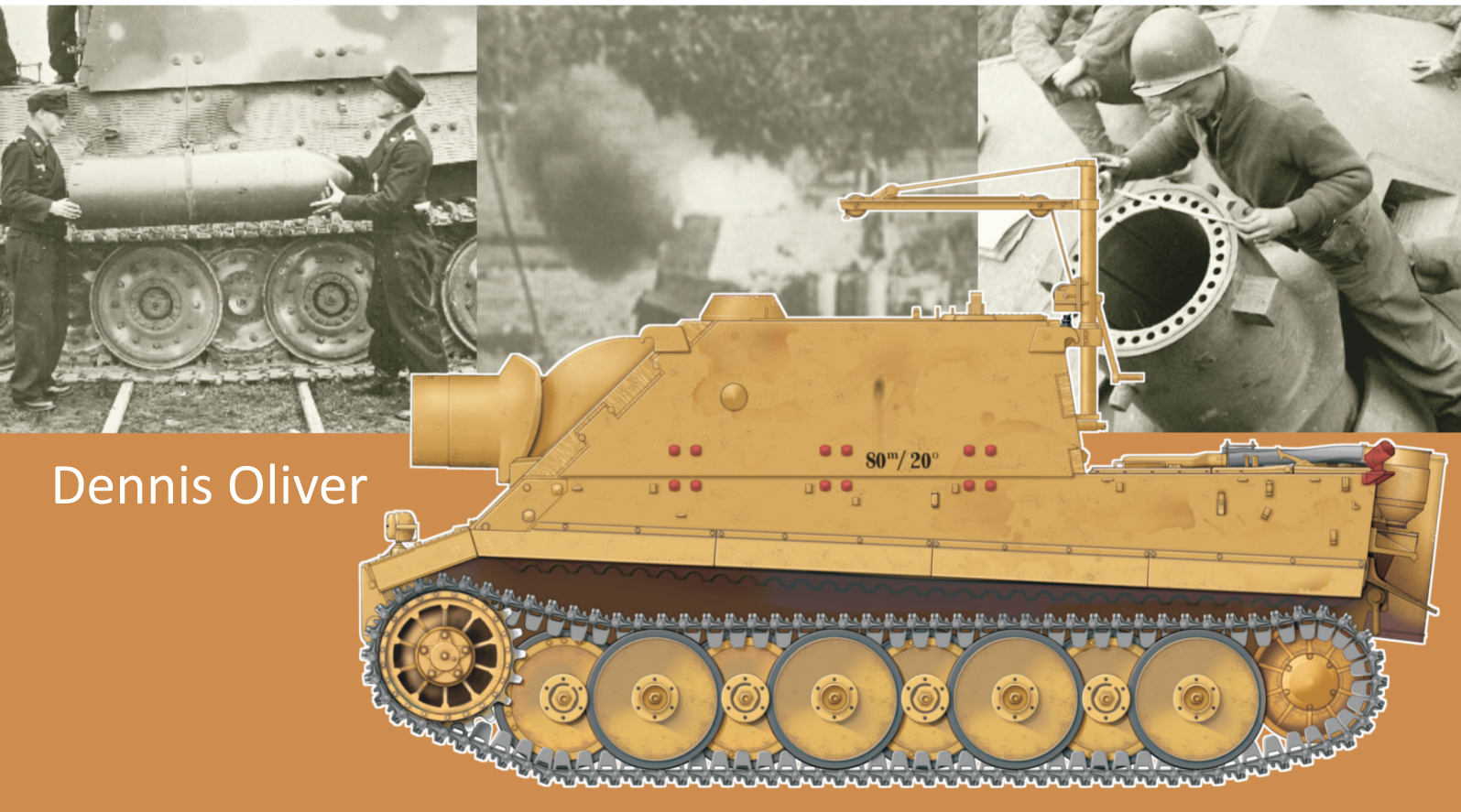
STURMTIGER

TANK CRAFT

SELF-PROPELLED ROCKET LAUNCHER
GERMAN ARMY
EASTERN AND WESTERN FRONTS, 1944-1945



Dennis Oliver

The Sturmtiger of Sturm-Mörser-Batterie 1000 which was recovered after being disabled in the town of Oberembt in late February 1945. It was transported to the UK, where this photograph was probably taken, and eventually scrapped. The only surviving part, the barrel liner, is today on display at the Imperial War Museum. This vehicle is examined in some detail on pages 57 and 58.

TankCraft 48

STURMTIGER

SELF-PROPELLED ROCKET LAUNCHER GERMAN ARMY EASTERN AND WESTERN FRONTS, 1944-1945

Dennis Oliver

Contents

Introduction 1
The Western Front, 1945.....3
The Sturmtiger Units.....4
Camouflage & Markings 17
Model Showcase 29
Modelling Products 43
Technical Details and Modifications 49
The Kriegsstärkenachweisungen.....63
Product Contact Details 64

Front cover. At top: Tamiya's 1/48 scale Sturmtiger model built and painted for the company's catalogue. The camouflage scheme is almost certainly based on the vehicle shown in the photograph at the top of this page. The images reproduced at the centre of the front cover depict, from left to right: A Sturmtiger, said to have been photographed at Sennelager in late 1944, with the crew loading one of the 38cm rounds. This vehicle is also featured in the Camouflage & Markings section on page 21. One of the two Sturmtigers that took part in the fighting in Warsaw in August and September 1944 photographed as the RW 61 launcher was fired. The Sturmtiger of Sturm-Mörser-Batterie 1000 disabled and abandoned in the town of Oberembt in February 1945 being examined by US Army officers.

First published in Great Britain in 2026 by Pen & Sword Military

An imprint of Pen & Sword Books Ltd
47 Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2AS
Copyright © Pen & Sword Ltd, 2026
Artwork copyright © Dennis Oliver

ISBN 978 1 03614 066 3

The right of Dennis Oliver and Oliver Publishing to be identified as the Author of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

A CPI catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from the publisher in writing.

Printed and bound in Malta by Gutenberg Press Ltd.

Pen & Sword Books Ltd incorporates the Imprints of Pen & Sword Military, Pen & Sword Family History, Pen & Sword Maritime, Pen & Sword Aviation, Pen & Sword Discovery, Wharncliffe Local History, Wharncliffe True Crime, Wharncliffe Transport, Pen & Sword Select, Pen & Sword Military Classics, Leo Cooper, The Praetorian Press, Remember When, Seaforth Publishing and Frontline Publishing.

For a complete list of Pen & Sword titles please contact
PEN & SWORD LIMITED 47 Church Street, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 2AS, England

E-mail: enquiries@pen-and-sword.co.uk Website: www.pen-and-sword.co.uk

By late August 1942 the city of Stalingrad on the Volga River had become the focus of the fighting on the Eastern Front.

Under immense pressure the Soviet positions on the western bank of the river held on stubbornly, often to the last man, turning every building into a defensive strongpoint.

Early attempts made by the Germans to use armoured vehicles had proven less than satisfactory as when Panzer-Regiment 2 lost twenty-eight of its tanks in a single engagement during the attacks on the northern suburbs of the city around the Dzerzhinsky Tractor Factory. Assault gun units were also at a decided disadvantage in the close quarters fighting and it was soon realised that what was required was a large-calibre weapon, capable of firing high explosive shells, on a fully-armoured chassis which would protect the crew as the gun supported infantry attacks.

Development time would of necessity be short and it was decided to mount a modified 15cm sIG 33 (1) on the hull of a Sturmgeschütz III assault gun fitted with a box-like armoured superstructure. The first twelve vehicles, designated Sturm-Infanteriegeschütz 33B, arrived in the East at the end of October 1942 and were employed in an attack on the Russian bridgehead at Spartakowka on the northern edge of the city. The new assault gun's main weapon performed well but many vehicles were disabled by anti-tank rifles and hamstrung by mechanical failures. But in any case, events soon overtook the need for an offensive weapon and within weeks 6.Armee was surrounded and the Germans in Stalingrad were now fighting for survival.

But the concept of the Sturmpanzer had been born and proposals that mounted ever-larger guns on existing chassis were actively encouraged by Hitler. The Führer's enthusiastic recommendation that a modified version of the massive 21cm Mörser 18 be used was considered but eventually dropped as even the hull and suspension of the Tiger I, at that time the heaviest tank in the Wehrmacht's arsenal, was not strong enough to carry it (2).

From its inception the Sturmpanzer programme had been surreptitiously opposed by the OKH, the army high command, and the Inspekteur der Panzertruppen (3) who felt that every resource should be directed toward the production of proven models. They believed that the opportunity to conduct an offensive operation in the near future against a major enemy city was unlikely to arise and a number of projects were quietly shelved.

Notes

1. 15cm schweres Infanteriegeschütz 33. The army's standard towed infantry support gun usually assigned to the thirteenth, heavy weapons, company of infantry regiments.
2. An experimental vehicle, based on the suspension of the Tiger II, was in fact designed and partially assembled by the war's end.
3. The army was administered by various inspectorates and the Inspekteur der Panzertruppen (Insp.d.Pz.Tr.) controlled the armoured units, in reality all formations designated as Panzer and Panzerjäger. Assault gun, or Sturmgeschütz, units operated under the auspices of the Inspekteur der Artillerie. The authority and priveleges of the different inspectorates were jealously guarded.

The prototype Sturmtiger photographed at Arys in East Prussia in October 1943. Hitler is standing behind the superstructure near the ammunition crane and Speer can be seen talking to two army officers on the left of this image. Distinguishing features of this vehicle are the squared-off lower portion of the gun mantlet, the additional armour on the hull front with large conical-shaped bolt covers and the metal tabs along the upper edge of the armour plate, the exact purpose of which is not understood. Note also the square-shaped aperture of the Kugelblende MG 34 mount and the driver's visor with prominent centre brace. Just visible are the rubber-tyred road wheels.

But the idea was revived on 11 April 1943 by Reichsminister Speer who advised Hitler of the existence of a 38cm breech loading rocket launcher, originally developed by Rheinmetall for the Kriegmarine, which was at that time undergoing trials with the army. Speer neglected to mention the weapon's many shortcomings, of which he was certainly aware, and as early as 4 May he recorded that Hitler was convinced that the 38cm weapon should be mounted on the chassis of the Tiger I. At the same time the Führer assured Generaloberst Guderian, the Insp.d.Pz.Tr, that nothing should interfere with production of what was then the army's most powerful tank.

On 27 May at a meeting of the Waffenkommission, a body controlled by Speer's office, the new design was revealed and the Reichsminister declared that the Berlin firm of Alkett (1) had been contracted to build a prototype vehicle. In September 1943, in anticipation of series production, Krupp was directed to manufacture new Tiger I hulls which were then to be sent to Henschel und Sohn at Kassel, no later than the following December, where the completed chassis would be assembled. From there they would be shipped to the Alkett factory where the armoured superstructures could be mounted. Early attempts to move the engine forward and mount the RW 61 launcher at the rear were quickly abandoned and a prototype with the weapon mounted at the very front of the hull was completed and presented to Hitler on 20 October 1943 at the Arys training grounds in East Prussia. The prototype vehicle was referred to at that time as 'Panzermörser mit 38cm auf Tiger I (Eisen)' and Hitler gave his immediate approval.

Alkett was advised that the first three vehicles were to be completed by 20 February 1944 but by the end of March not a single Sturmtiger had left the assembly lines. The manufacturers pleaded that material shortages and the production schedules of current designs were causing delays but there was a significant degree of foot-dragging on the part of the army and once again Guderian complained to Hitler that every Tiger was needed at the front. Compromising with the general, as he often did, the Führer decreed on 19 April 1944 that production of the Tiger I would not be interrupted but the Sturmtiger project would proceed with the proviso that only the hulls of tanks returned to Germany for long-term repair would be utilised. In a further concession to the generals, the initial production schedule of ten vehicles per month was revised to twelve in total.

Despite Hitler's interest, the programme languished and by August 1944 just the prototype and two production conversions had been completed. But in that month the uprising in Warsaw provided the very conditions for which the Sturmpanzer concept had been developed. Insurgents of the Polish Home Army had taken the German garrison almost completely by surprise and occupied large sections of the city which they held onto tenaciously, anticipating that they would be relieved by the advancing Red Army. Sturdy buildings of brick and stone provided ideal defensive positions and the Germans eventually deployed their heaviest artillery pieces to Warsaw including the huge 60cm Karl-Gerät siege mortar, a number of Sturmpanzer IV self-propelled 15cm guns and the three available Sturmtigers (2). The potency of these weapons was emphasised in the German press, most famously the Deutsche Wochenscahu weekly newsreel.

At a conference which began on Friday, 18 August 1944 and ran into the following Sunday, the subject of the Sturmtiger was raised and Hitler was informed that another seven vehicles were expected to be assembled by 21 September. Taking the opportunity to stress the importance he attached to this weapon system, Hitler expressed an opinion that at least 300 rounds of 38cm ammunition would need to be produced every month. Slightly more than this number were in fact made available throughout the complete production run.

Alkett exceeded expectations and was able to complete ten new vehicles in September and following the fighting in Warsaw, another five were contracted for and delivered in December bringing production to an end (3).

Built in such limited numbers the Sturmtiger was unable to effect the course of the war as Hitler had hoped. By 1945, when the Sturmtiger companies became fully operational, the scale of the fighting on the Western and Eastern Fronts ensured that three platoon-sized units of any vehicle type would go largely unnoticed. But in the engagements where the Sturmtigers were able employ their main weapon from a fixed position in the role for which they were intended the result was truly devastating. With its blunt, almost other-worldy appearance the Sturmtiger was visually impressive if nothing else and the notion of a marriage of a frighteningly large main weapon, the 38cm RW 61, with Germany's most famous tank retains its fascination.

The following narrative was based, for the most part, on official wartime documents, the accounts of former tank crews and, most helpfully, post-war investigations carried out by local German newspapers and magazines into the histories of vehicles which had been abandoned in their towns and remained there for many years. Unfortunately there are a great many gaps in our knowledge and where I have been forced to resort to conjecture I have tried to make this clear.

Notes

1. Altmärkische Kettenwerk, Alkett, was a major manufacturer of armoured vehicles. The main plant was located in Berlin-Borsigwalde on the Breitenbachstraße.
2. What part the prototype played is debatable and is examined in the unit histories.
3. A planning chart disseminated by the Hauptaussschuss Waffen, the main weapons committee, compiled in early 1945 clearly shows that five Sturmtigers were assembled in December although just one was planned for. The conversions were all completed and accepted by 18 December 1944.

THE WESTERN FRONT, 1945

Our map shows the situation in western and central Europe from the beginning of 1945, as the very last actions of the Ardennes Offensive were taking place, to May of the same year when the last German units surrendered. Changes to the front line and lost German territory are shown as follows: A. The front as of 5 January 1945 when it had been stabilised somewhat following the Wacht am Rhein and Nordwind operations. B. The Allied advance up to 24 March 1945. C. The approximate boundaries of the Ruhr Pocket on 5 April 1945, the day after US 1st and 9th Armies completed the encirclement of a large part of Heeresgruppe B. See also the map on page 11. D. The front line on 18 April 1945. E. The furthest extent of the Allied advance as of 8 May 1945 when hostilities in the West officially ended. Note that, in places, this exceeded the boundaries of the demarcation agreed to with the Soviets. Places of importance mentioned in the main text are indicated by the following numbers: 1. Truppenübungsplatz Sennelager, the Army's training centre which incorporated Panzer-Ersatz-Abteilung 500 at Paderborn. 2. Oberembt. 3. Hützemert/Drolshagen. 4. Calbe and Brumby. 5. Ebendorf. 6. Menden. 7. Rogäsen. 8. Frontenhausen. 9. Lichtentanne. 10. Remagen. 11. Headquarters, 47.Armeekorps, December 1944-January 1945. 12. Headquarters, 74.Armeekorps, late January 1945. 13. Headquarters, 81.Armeekorps, late January 1945. The inclusion of these locations is explained in the unit histories.

Just three companies, actually platoon-sized units, were formed to operate the Sturmtiger but a number of vehicles may have found their way into other formations or ad-hoc Kampfgruppen in the chaotic last weeks of the war. Throughout this section I have used the abbreviations Stu.Mörs.Kp and Stu.Mörs.Batt for Sturm-Mörser-Kompanie and Sturm-Mörser-Batterie respectively, OKH for Oberkommando des Heeres, the high command of the army, HWA for Heereswaffenamt, the army's ordnance directorate, HZA for Heereszeugamt, the supply office subordinated to the HWA and Insp.d.Pz.Tr for Inspekteur der Panzertruppen. Any other abbreviations are explained in the text. All armoured vehicles were identified by a Fahrgestellnummer, or chassis number, here rendered as Fgst Nr. but it should be remembered that the numbers shown here actually relate to the Tiger I chassis used for the conversion which all began with 250 or, from about April 1944, with 251. To spare the reader I have used the English term allocation list in place of Zuführungslist and for similar reasons I have not used Roman numerals to identify German corps-sized units, a practice which was also adopted in the production of the German's own daily situation maps. The vehicles are referred to as Sturmtiger throughout, although several different titles are encountered in official records, unless quoting from original documents.

Notes

1. These production changes and others are described in greater detail the Technical Details and Modifications section of this book.

The Prototype and Stu.MörsKp.1000.

The prototype vehicle, built between August and October 1943, was based on the suspension and hull of a Tiger I with a box-like superstructure manufactured by Brandenburg Eisenwerke at the former Reichsbahn repair shop at Kirchmöser. The forward sections of the hull were cut away, quite crudely in most cases, to accommodate the superstructure but the engine layout was unchanged. The 38cm RW 61 rocket launcher was fitted at the front of the superstructure in a ball mount of conventional design protected by an armoured mantlet.

Most accounts assume the hull and suspension of the prototype were taken from a recycled Tiger I but there is no direct evidence to support this and indeed the decision to use tanks returned to Germany for repair was not made until April 1944, as mentioned earlier. Contemporary photographs show that the hull was fitted with the simplified Feifel air-filtering system incorporated into Tiger I series production in March 1943 and the machined drive sprocket introduced in the following April beginning with Fgst Nr.250220. The latter could, of course, have been retro-fitted to earlier production vehicles. The S-mine launchers on the rear corners of the engine deck, which are clearly visible in early photographs, were dropped from Tiger I production in September 1943 but there is no evidence of any Zimmerit coating which was first applied in the previous month.

These features would suggest a production date between April and August 1943 in the Fgst Nr. range 250220 to 250465 and it is very possible that the completed hull and suspension came straight from the assembly lines at Henschel (1).

At least one source states that the prototype vehicle was based on Tiger I Fgst Nr.250043 but that Sturmtiger is noted separately on the surviving HWA allocation lists for October and December 1944 where the prototype is referred to simply as Gusseisen, or cast iron. The latter description is itself curious as prototypes were usually constructed from

Although this image is of mediocre quality it is included here due to its historical significance. The presence of both the surviving Maus prototype, at the rear, and the Sturmtiger in the foreground confirm that this image was taken in 1946 when both vehicles were shipped to Kubinka in the Soviet Union where they remain to this day. The Sturmtiger is without doubt the example captured at Rogäsen, and subsequently shipped to Kirchmöser, and the production features can be compared with the vehicle shown in the photograph reproduced on the following page.

The prototype Sturmtiger photographed in Rogäsen in May 1945. Compare the Kugelblende mount, launcher mantlet, driver's periscope cover and additional hull armour with the vehicle shown in the photograph on page 1. The technical features are also discussed on page 59.

mild steel, which has a very low carbon content, while cast iron is normally employed where complex shapes are required.

Most accounts state that in early August 1944 the prototype was ordered to Warsaw with Fgst Nr.250091 and Fgst Nr.250230 and these three were the only vehicles available at least until the end of that month. The detailed transportation records of 9.Armee, the relevant authority, have survived and I will endeavour to explain them here (1).

The evening report for Saturday, 12 August lists a battery of three guns, referred to as '38cm Sturm-Mörser', with the notation that the first was expected to arrive in the Warsaw area by the following day. The very next entry states that one 'Tiger mit 38cm Werfer' was expected from Germany and would reach Warsaw at the same time. The follow up report submitted on the morning of 13 August mentions only the single 'Tiger mit 38cm Werfer' coming from Germany but this was amended that evening to refer to the vehicle specifically as a prototype as does the report for the next morning.

The dispatch of the prototype vehicle is confirmed by an earlier Heeresgruppe (HG) Mitte report dated 12 August which stated that, among other vehicles, a single 'Tiger with 38cm rocket launcher (experimental model), not suitable for combat against armour piercing weapons, because structure is made of mild steel' was being assigned to the army group headquarters (2). Another HG Mitte report of 12 August mentions that the first Sturmtiger from a battery of three, accompanied by six rounds of 38cm ammunition, was expected to be unloaded the following day and this must have been the prototype. The remainder were expected to arrive over the next few days. Interestingly, this report stated that all vehicles were crewed by civilians, actually Alkett employees, and that 9.Armee was expected to replace them with military personnel.

On Sunday, 13 August the first Sturmtiger unit, Sturm-Mörs.Kp.1000, was officially formed in Germany and tasked with the performance of combat trials and development of tactical doctrine. As early as the following Monday the company was assigned to HG Mitte but it is unclear when the crews arrived in the East. Indeed, a number of civilians were still with the company when the last vehicles were withdrawn to Sennelager in western Germany late October 1944.

But returning to the 9.Armee transportation reports. In the 14 August evening communique the title Sturm-Mörs.Kp.1000 was used for the first time with the notation that the unit was equipped with three 'Tiger mit 38cm Werfer' and that all would arrive the next day. An additional Tiger was to follow but, as mentioned earlier, just the prototype and two series production vehicles existed at this time, Fgst Nr.250091 and Fgst Nr.250230.

Notes

1. These reports were regularly submitted twice a day, once in the morning and again late in the evening. Those mentioned here list units, often detached from their parent formations, that had been assigned to 9.Armee which was responsible for the area around Warsaw and was in the process of being rebuilt after the disastrous summer battles. The Sturmtigers are listed under artillery assets.

2. My translation. The other vehicles were the Sturmpanzer IV self-propelled 15cm guns from Sturm-Panzer-Abteilung zvB 218 and the assault guns and remotely-controlled demolition carriers of Panzer-Abteilung 302(Fkl). It was stressed by OKH that these vehicles were to be employed in street fighting, that is, operations against the Polish Home Army.

Notes

1. This may have in fact been Pruszkow, a few kilometres to the east just outside Warsaw which lies on the on the main railway line and had been upgraded to handle heavy vehicles. Although it is open to interpretation I am loath to merely omit this entry from the narrative as most accounts do.
2. See page 63.

However, in the evening report of 15 August the total for Sturm-Mörs.Kp. 1000 was reduced to two vehicles and it is clear that the entry for a Sturmtiger coming from Germany has been manually erased. The evening report for the next day was the most detailed so far but as it is confusing and seemingly contradictory I have reproduced it here exactly as it appears in the report:

Sturm-Mörser-Kp. 1000: 2 Tiger mit 38cm Werfer

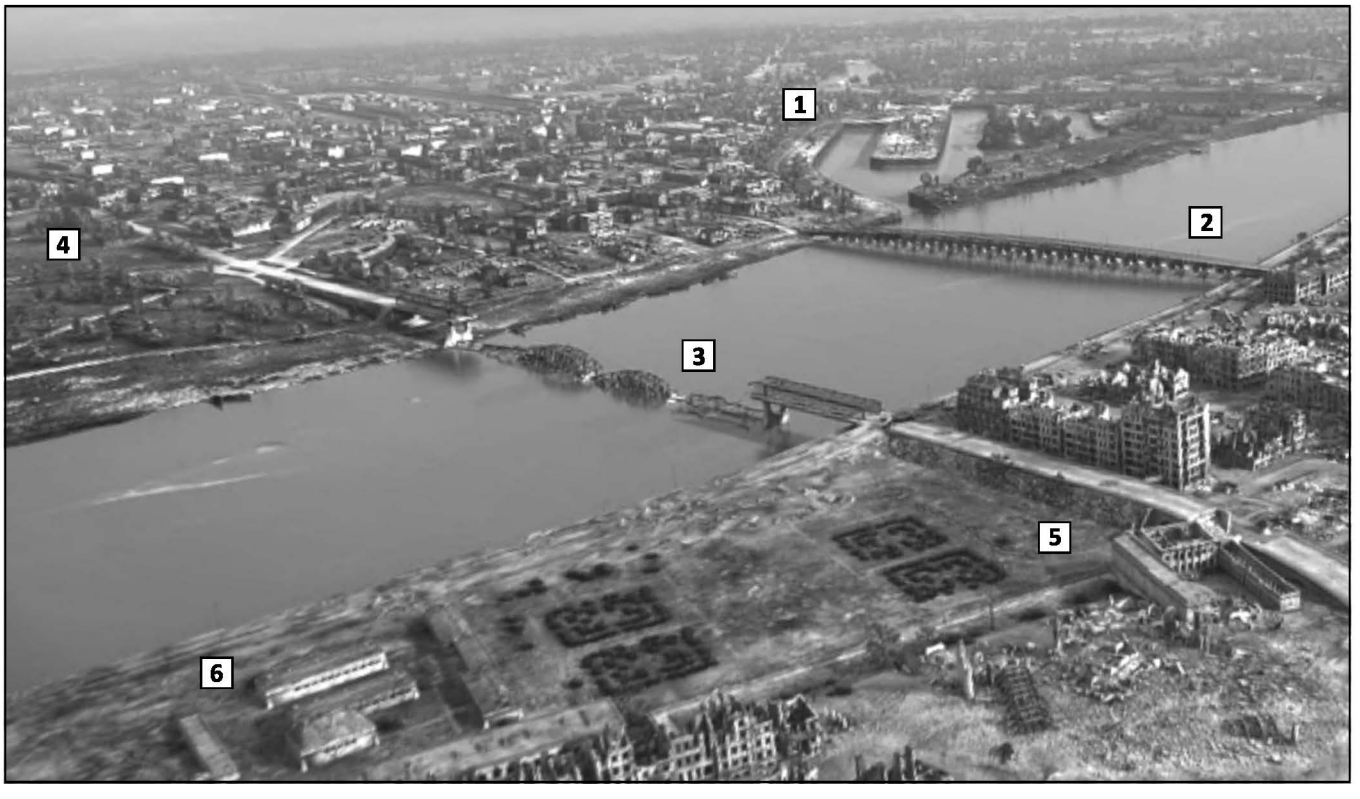
1. Tiger in Blonie eingetroffen, 15.8. 11.00Uh

2. Tiger in Zalauf

I feel certain that this is meant to indicate that the company was equipped with two Sturmtigers only and that one had been unloaded at Blonie (1) at 11.00am on the previous day while another was in transit. As mentioned above, the prototype had arrived a few days earlier on Sunday, 13 August. On the following Thursday the second Sturmtiger arrived. This was apparently unloaded at some time during during the next day and additional numbers are not mentioned in the transportation reports again. A daily strength report compiled for 9.Armee and dated 18 August 1944 clearly shows, for the first time in Warsaw, Sturm-Mörs.Kp. 1000 with two Sturmtigers and this was reiterated in a similar report two days later.

Subsequent daily reports continued to show two vehicles, sometimes referred to as 'Panzer VI mit 38cm', until 10 October after which time they are not mentioned again. That the company was very much an experimental formation at this stage is confirmed by the fact that detailed tables of organisation were not issued until 15 September (2).

Above: This sequence of stills, made from the well known Deutsche Wochenschau weekly newsreel film, shows one of the Sturmtigers in action in Warsaw at the moment the 38cm rocket leaves the launcher. A photograph of a similar situation, which appears to have been taken at about the same time, is shown at the top of the back cover. There are several apparent differences between the two vehicles, most importantly the colour of the ammunition crane as explained more fully on page 19, and I believe the film and photograph portray two different Sturmtigers, Fgst Nr.250091 and Fgst Nr.250230, the two August production models. Below: Part of the Warsaw city centre photographed from the north-west. The Vistula River docks in the suburb of Praga (1) can be seen in the background just behind the intact Kierbedz Bridge (2). The Citadel Bridge (3), rebuilt after its destruction during the First World War, was demolished by the Germans on 14 September 1944. The open ground on the eastern bank of the river (4) leads to Brodno and it was probably from here that the Sturmtiger filmed for the Deutsche Wochenschau fired on the areas around the Citadel (5) and Zoliborz (6), a location that was contested until at least Tuesday, 26 September.



The prototype Sturmtiger photographed at the Kubinka armour testing facility at some time after the end of the war. The notations on the hull side and front were made by the vehicle's new owners but the camouflage pattern, made up of patches of Rotbraun and Olivgrün on the Dunkelgelb base, would appear to be original. The vehicle is also shown and discussed on page 24 of the Camouflage & Markings section.

What part the prototype played in the Warsaw battles is unclear but it is certainly not the vehicle featured in the Deutsche Wochenschau film which shows a Sturmtiger, viewed from the rear, firing at a multi-story building near the Citadel Bridge as discussed on the previous page. It is likely that the prototype was sent back to Germany within days of being unloaded at Pruszkow and it had certainly left Poland by the end of August 1944.

An evaluation report from 9.Armee dated Saturday, 2 September stated that Sturm-Mörs.Kp. 1000 'mit 2 Sturmtigers auf Pz VI Fahrgestell' had been engaged in urban combat since 19 August 1944 and later correspondence of 10 January 1945 from the HWA to Reichsminister Speer, regarding the suitability of the Tiger chassis, states that only two vehicles took part in the Warsaw battles.

There is some evidence that Hitler considered sending the prototype to the West, possibly to assist in the planned destruction of Paris, and in his post-war account General Walter Warlimont (1) stated that a Sturmtiger was allocated to the Western Front at that time but was still in Germany when Paris was evacuated.

Some accounts suggest that it was stuck at Vouziers, 40 kilometres north-west of Reims, while others state that it reached Soisson much further to the west. In any case, by October 1944 the prototype was with Pz.Ers.Abt 500 at Paderborn (2) in western Germany and was still there in December 1944. Although it is the subject of some debate, as are most aspects of Sturmtiger production, the prototype is certainly the vehicle on display today at the Kubinka Museum outside Moscow (3). Captured by units of the Red Army in May 1945, Soviet records indicated that the vehicle was located at Kirchmöser and a request was made for transport to Kubinka. An official photograph of the Sturmtiger gives the location of its capture as Rogäsen, just a few kilometres south of Brandenburg, and it was probably discovered in the village and then towed the short distance to the Eisenwerke Kirchmöser plant. This factory, it will be remembered, was where the armoured superstructures of the Sturmtiger were built.

During the fighting in Warsaw the Sturmtigers are said to have been positioned just to the south of the Brodno, north-east of the city centre on the eastern side of the Vistula, and from the open ground of Pole Mokotowskie to a few blocks further east as far as the modern-day Plac Na Rozdrozu on the western bank. At the end of August a Sturmtiger firing from the area to the south of the Jewish cemetery, was able to hit targets between Fort Legionow and the present-day National Mint less than 3,000 metres away while the other vehicle shelled Polish positions in the suburb of Sadyba which managed to hold out until the end of the month.

Notes

1. As deputy chief of the Wehrmachtführungsstab, Warlimont attended Hitler's daily briefings.

2. Panzer-Ersatz-Abteilung 500, a training and replacement unit specifically for armoured troops.

3. Researcher and modeller Cheng Hui, whose work has been featured in a number of books in this series, was able to identify identical fine details regarding the bolt covers and weld beads visible in photographs of the prototype vehicle and the Kubinka Sturmtiger.

Notes

1. A notation on the 23 November transportation report confirmed that the company left Warsaw as scheduled during the evening of the previous day. Unfortunately the number of vehicles is not given.
2. The month typed onto both sheets has been written over, as has the year, but the allocation and shipping dates make it clear which period they refer to.

The last rounds may have been fired on 8 September when insurgent positions along the west bank of the Vistula were targeted. One of the many projectiles that failed to explode on impact is today on display at the Muzeum Wojksa Polskiego in Warsaw. Given that just 316 rounds of 38cm ammunition were produced in total we can only speculate as to how many were fired during the fighting in Warsaw.

As mentioned earlier, the two series production Sturmtigers were still recorded as being on hand with 9.Armee in Warsaw on 10 October 1944. But just five days later the transportation reports stated that both were to be sent to Budapest on the following day and this was actually achieved on Tuesday, 17 October.

Almost immediately the train was returned to Warsaw, arriving just after midnight on the following Friday. Later that day the company was reinstated to the combat strength of 9.Armee but the report shows just one vehicle on hand and this situation remains until 19 November by which time the company was slated to leave Warsaw and move to Sennelager in Germany (1).

The fate of the Sturmtiger that failed to return to Warsaw is uncertain but some sources state that it was abandoned in Nyékládháza in Hungary, more than 100 kilometres east of Budapest, and subsequently captured by the Russians in late October 1944. It should be mentioned that the possible identification of Nyékládháza seems to have been based on a claim made some years ago, predicated on the appearance of the buildings visible in the photograph, reproduced on page 5, now known to have been taken in Rogäsen in Germany. The Nyékládháza story has been repeated in so many subsequent accounts that it was eventually accepted as fact. Interestingly, reports compiled by the Insp.d.Pz.Tr, dated 5 and 10 November, stated that the company was in Germany at that time undergoing a refit. Although these are usually dismissed as incorrect they may refer to parts of the company and perhaps the Sturmtiger which did not return from Budapest.

The company's remaining vehicles were loaded onto railway cars in Warsaw on 22 November and had arrived at Sennelager by the following day. One of the three Sturmtigers that had been held there was probably assigned to the company at that time.

Just two allocation lists for the Sturmtiger have survived and rather unhelpfully both are labelled as October 1944 (2) although the second refers to activities conducted in December. The latter confirms that two further vehicles, Fgst Nr.250327 and Fgst Nr.251168 which had been allocated in late October, were shipped to the company on 1 December 1944. The list implies, but does not state specifically, that the two production series vehicles assigned in August were indeed Fgst Nr.250091 and Fgst Nr.250230 as mentioned earlier. The company was expected to be combat-ready within one week and it was anticipated that it would take part in the coming Ardennes Offensive.

.....text continued on page 10

This image was taken from a page of an instruction manual produced for the Sturmtiger and the censor's Geheim, or secret, classification is still visible. The camouflage pattern seems to be typical of early September-assembled vehicles and traces of a similar style can be discerned on the hull from of the vehicle shown on the following page. Although obscured here by mud, the camouflage was extended, rather unusually, to the suspension. See also page 21.

On 26 February 1945 this Sturmtiger of Sturmmörser-Batterie 1000 was disabled while withdrawing towards the east through the small town of Oberembt about 50 kilometres west of Cologne. Moving along Jülicher Strasse, the main street, the vehicle made an abrupt left turn into Neusser Strasse, probably heading for the Kinkelbach bridge on the northern edge of town. It had travelled less than 100 metres before slipping into a ditch on the side of the road, losing a track in the process. Almost immediately it came under fire from a US Army M4 Sherman tank that had entered Oberembt from the south-east and was moving north along Buschgasse. The crew abandoned the Sturmtiger and fled towards the Kinkelbach bridge while the gunner, possibly Oberkanonier Kurt Steinacker who is buried in the town, attempted to hold off the advancing Americans. The unfortunate driver, Josef Hauser, was shot as he tried to escape and the gunner, whose body has been covered here with straw, was killed with a hand grenade after a brief exchange of fire. This vehicle is also shown in the Camouflage & Markings section on pages 22 and 23 and the technical aspects are discussed on pages 27 and 28.

.....text continued from page 8

Notes

1. Responsibility for training and replacements was assigned to Panzer-Haubitzen-Ersatz-und Ausbildung-Abteilung 201 at Gross Born.
2. This unit was attached to US XIII Corps at the time.

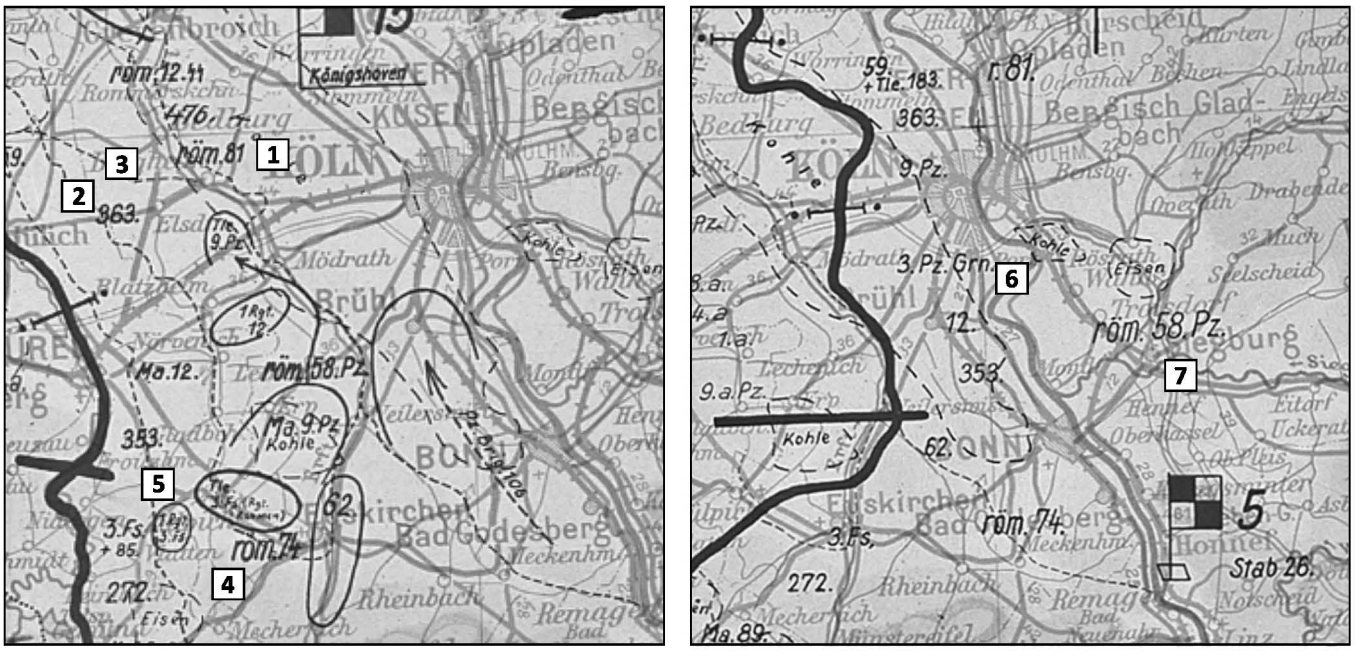
By 15 December 1944 the full company, together with the recently-formed Sturm-Mörs.Kp.1001, had arrived at the front and both were subordinated to 15.Armee and placed under the operational control of 47.Armeekorps at Hitler's personal direction. On 16 December, the first day of the offensive, Sturm-Mörs.Kp.1000 reported that only three Sturmtigers were serviceable and it appears that the fourth vehicle did not return to the company until 26 December 1944. Although a number of accounts assume otherwise, there is no real evidence that either of the companies was involved in any fighting in December, although they may have been close to the present-day Belgian border.

In early January 1945 the company reported that only one Sturmtiger was operational while at least two, or possibly three, were in long-term repair. On 23 January 1945, in a move that had been anticipated since the previous November, the company was renamed Sturm-Mörser-Batterie (RW 61)1000 and transferred to the artillery inspectorate (1).

At the same time the other two companies that had been raised by then were also renamed and the number of vehicles authorised for each battery was increased from four to six. Two Sturmtigers that were at that time held at Sennelager were assigned to Sturm-Mörs.Batt.1000 and seven NCOs and four men from the Sturm-Artillerie-Schule at Burg were to be transferred to Sennelager to provide crews. But the additional personnel did not leave Burg until late February and the vehicles were still at Sennelager in April by which time the last remnants of Sturm-Mörs.Batt.1000, together with Sturm-Mörs.Batt.1001, were trapped in the Ruhr Pocket. Also on 23 January 1945 both batteries were subordinated to 5.Panzerarmee which was part of the German defensive line north of the Mosel River.

Most accounts state that Sturm-Mörs.Kp. 1000 operated with 74.Armeekorps from late January onwards but as early as 5 February 1945 elements of US 113th Cavalry Group (2), advancing towards the sector of the front held by 81.Armeekorps recorded that they had been fired on by 'rocket type' projectiles which produced massive explosions. Ten rounds fell on the Allied positions while a further two rounds impacted on a nearby village with devastating effect. The Americans believed they were fired by the Sturmtiger found abandoned in the town of Bedburg, about 20 kilometres to the west of Cologne, which they occupied on 2 March 1945 and this is the only mention of this vehicle that I have been able to find.

A few days earlier, on 26 February, Sturmtiger Fgst Nr.250237 of Sturm-Mörs.Batt.1000 was caught in Oberembt as it tried to escape the Allied advance. The driver was killed as he attempt to flee and at least one crewman was captured and interrogated. The village of Oberembt is about 7 kilometres to the south-west of the much larger town of Bedburg and it is difficult to believe that the Sturmtigers mentioned here are not two separate vehicles.



The images above show details of the OKW situation maps for 22 February, at left, and 3 March 1945, at right. The sector of 81.Armeekorps (1) is noted north of the Cologne to Düren railway line and encompassed the towns of Oberembt (2), where Sturmtiger Fgst Nr.250327 was lost, and Bedburg (3) where another vehicle from Sturm-Mörs.Kp. 1000 may have been found by elements of US 113th Cavalry Group as mentioned in the text. As can be seen from the map, the sector of 74.Armeekorps (4) is far to the south and it was here, at Vetweiss (5), that the remnants of Sturm-Mörs.Kp.1001 began their retreat toward the east. The site of the Kriegsmarine ferry crossing at Rodenkirchen (6) is indicated on the 3 March map and it is likely that whatever vehicles and personnel of both companies remained undertook the crossing together under the control of 74.Armeekorps. From there the corps moved through Siegburg (7) to the north-east. The prefix 'röm' used here with the corps numbers indicates that they would normally be written as Roman numerals.

Some days earlier, on 26 February, a similar barrage had almost completely demolished the village of Giesendorf, inflicting severe casualties on the American units there which were preparing an attack on nearby Elsdorf, just south of Bedburg.

Retreating towards the north-east, the remnants of the company were amalgamated with the survivors of Sturm-Mörs.Batt.1001 and subordinated 74.Armeekorps. Together with most of Heeresgruppe B, the company was trapped on the Ruhr Pocket and the last vehicles were lost in April 1945 in the attempts to hold back the advance of US 18th Corps.

Stu.Mörs.Kp.1001

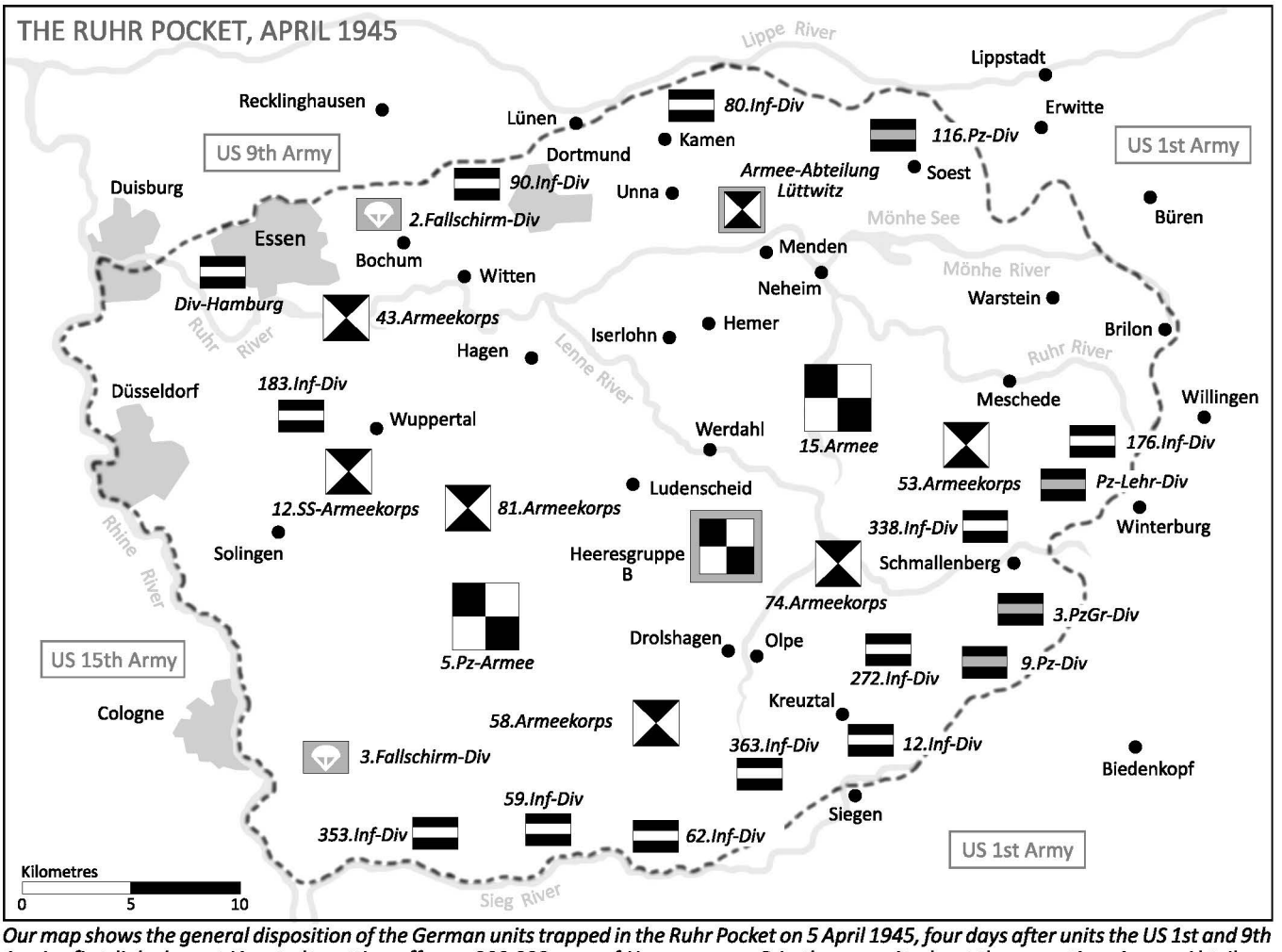
Formed on 23 September 1944 the company reported that its authorised personnel establishment had been completed by the first week of October. Four Sturmtigers were shipped to the company from the HZA on 11 October, Fgst Nr.25043, 25051, 250103 and 250471, and it appears that these had all arrived by the end of the month. On Sunday, 10 December 1944 Insp.d.Pz.Tr reported that the company was assigned to OB West (1) and by the following Friday had been subordinated to 15.Armee in anticipation of the planned offensive in the Ardennes. On the same day OB West advised that Hitler had personally ordered that the two available Sturmtiger companies would support the units of 47.Armeekorps which was tasked with holding the northern flank of the attack against an expected counter thrust from the direction of Liège. But it is unlikely that any of the available Sturmtigers took part in the fighting here and by the end of December the four original vehicles were still with the company.

This situation remained the same until 19 January 1945 at least but after that time the company consistently reported three Sturmtigers on hand which suggests that one was either lost or withdrawn to Germany for repairs and perhaps never returned..

On 23 January 1945 the company was renamed Sturm-Mörser-Batterie 1001 and transferred to the artillery inspectorate. Although the strength of the Sturmtiger companies was increased from four to six it appears that this company never received the additional two vehicles. US Army intelligence reports state that Sturm-Mörser-Batterien 1000 and 1001 were still subordinated to 74.Armeekorps

Notes

1. Oberbefehlshaber West, the overall commander of German forces on the Western Front.



Our map shows the general disposition of the German units trapped in the Ruhr Pocket on 5 April 1945, four days after units the US 1st and 9th Armies first linked up at Lippstadt, cutting off over 300,000 men of Heeresgruppe B in the area. At about the same time Armee-Abteilung Lüttwitz, shown here north of Menden, was formed from elements of 48.Panzerkorps. Note that following the convention of the OKW daily situation maps, I have not used Roman numerals to identify corps-sized units. The surviving elements of Sturm-Mörs.Batt.1000 and Sturm-Mörs.Batt.1001 were under the command of 74.Armeekorps on the south-eastern edge of the pocket while the Sturmtigers of Sturm-Mörs.Batt.1002 were operating with 116.Panzer-Division and Armee-Abteilung Lüttwitz on the north-east of the perimeter.

The Sturmtiger of Stu.Mörs.Batt.1001 commanded by Leutnant Karl Doll photographed in the town of Hützemert in April 1945. Herr Josef Theile-Schürholz, who was a young child at the time, remembered that the vehicle was abandoned outside his family home on the southern end of Hauptstrasse. US Army units that recovered the Sturmtiger reported that it contain five 38cm rockets. Contrary to Leutnant Doll's account, the right track is clearly not broken.

Notes

1. Allied bombing destroyed the Rodenkirchen bridge on 14 January 1945. The Kriegsmarine's 3.Transportflottille was specially assigned to move army units across the Rhine.
2. Quite obviously this vehicle is either the prototype itself, a production vehicle with identical features was assembled, probably in July or August 1944, or the photograph's caption is simply incorrect.

at this time but, as mentioned above, this may not be strictly correct and the subsequent movements of the company are unclear. But the record of an interview made by an officer of US 1st Infantry Division with a German prisoner dated 28 February may provide a clue.

The prisoner stated that two Sturmtigers had been located in the town of Vettweiss, a few kilometres south-east of Düren, on the northern edge of the sector of the front controlled by 74.Armeekorps. Hampered by a lack of fuel, they occasionally made sorties to the banks of the Roer River to fire on Allied positions on the western bank. The prisoner claimed that these vehicles were originally from a battery of four but one required a new gun tube and another had been damaged and presumably those two had been withdrawn.

On 26 February supplies of fuel arrived and both Sturmtigers left Vettweiss, heading in the direction of Horrem, some 25 kilometres to the north. The main road east from there leads directly to Rodenkirchen, where the last remnants of Stu.Mörs.Batt.1001 crossed the Rhine by ferry, a distance of just 12 kilometres (1).

The crossing occurred in March 1945 and some accounts suggest that at that time just one operational Sturmtiger remained. Photographs of the vehicle, which unfortunately cannot be reproduced here, show that it was fitted with the early-production Kugelblende mount which featured a square aperture, additional armour on the hull front held on by large bolts, a Bosch headlight and metal tabs for the protective gun cover. The inner sleeve of the 38cm RW 61 has thirty-two vents and was held on by seven bolts. In fact the parts of the vehicle that are visible are almost identical to those seen on the prototype when it was captured by the Soviets at Rogäsen (2). In any case it is not the Sturmtiger of Stu.Mörs.Batt.1001 lost at Hützemert early in the following month (see below) suggesting that the company had at least two serviceable vehicles on hand in March.

By the first week of April the company had absorbed the remnants of Sturm-Mörser-Batt.1000, perhaps just personnel, and was still with 74.Armeekorps which held the south-eastern edge of the defensive perimeter of the Ruhr Pocket.

On Monday, 9 April Stu.Mörs.Batt.1001 was ordered to send a Sturmtiger to support the German troops fighting in the Drolshagen area. Commanded by Leutnant Karl Hubert Doll, the Sturmtiger reached the area south of Hützemert, just north of Drolshagen, in the early hours of the following morning and took up a concealed position in the wooded area north of Herrnscheid. At this point US Army units had pushed to Olpe, just a few kilometres to the east. At some time during the day Leutnant Doll received a message directing him to fire on the small town of Drolshagen using the tower of Sankt Clemens Pfarrkirche as an aiming point

but decided instead, apparently in consultation with his crew, to ignore his orders. Doll later claimed that a barrage of 38cm projectiles would have been sufficient to completely demolish the town and kill most, if not all, the inhabitants. Fearing that he would be replaced by the company commander, Hauptmann Kodar, Doll headed towards Hützemert where he believed he could meet the enemy advance in open ground. But as the vehicle reached the southern edge of the town, just short of the Drolshagen to Wegeringhausen road, the left track came away from the drive sprocket and as it was on an incline the crew could not repair it (1).

Realising that any attempt to destroy the fully-laden Sturmtiger would result in a massive explosion, the crew simply left it. But they soon found themselves engaged in a firefight with the advancing Americans and the gunner and loader were killed while Leutnant Doll and the radio operator were wounded (2). By 12 April 1945 the US Army was in complete control of Hützemert but the Sturmtiger remained where it had broken down for several weeks, fully loaded with rockets, until it was towed away.

Without vehicles, the Sturmtiger crews of Stu.Mörs.Batt.1001 were deployed as infantrymen in support of 353.Infanterie-Division until 18 April 1945 when the last German units in the Ruhr Pocket surrendered.

Stu.Mörs.Kp.1002

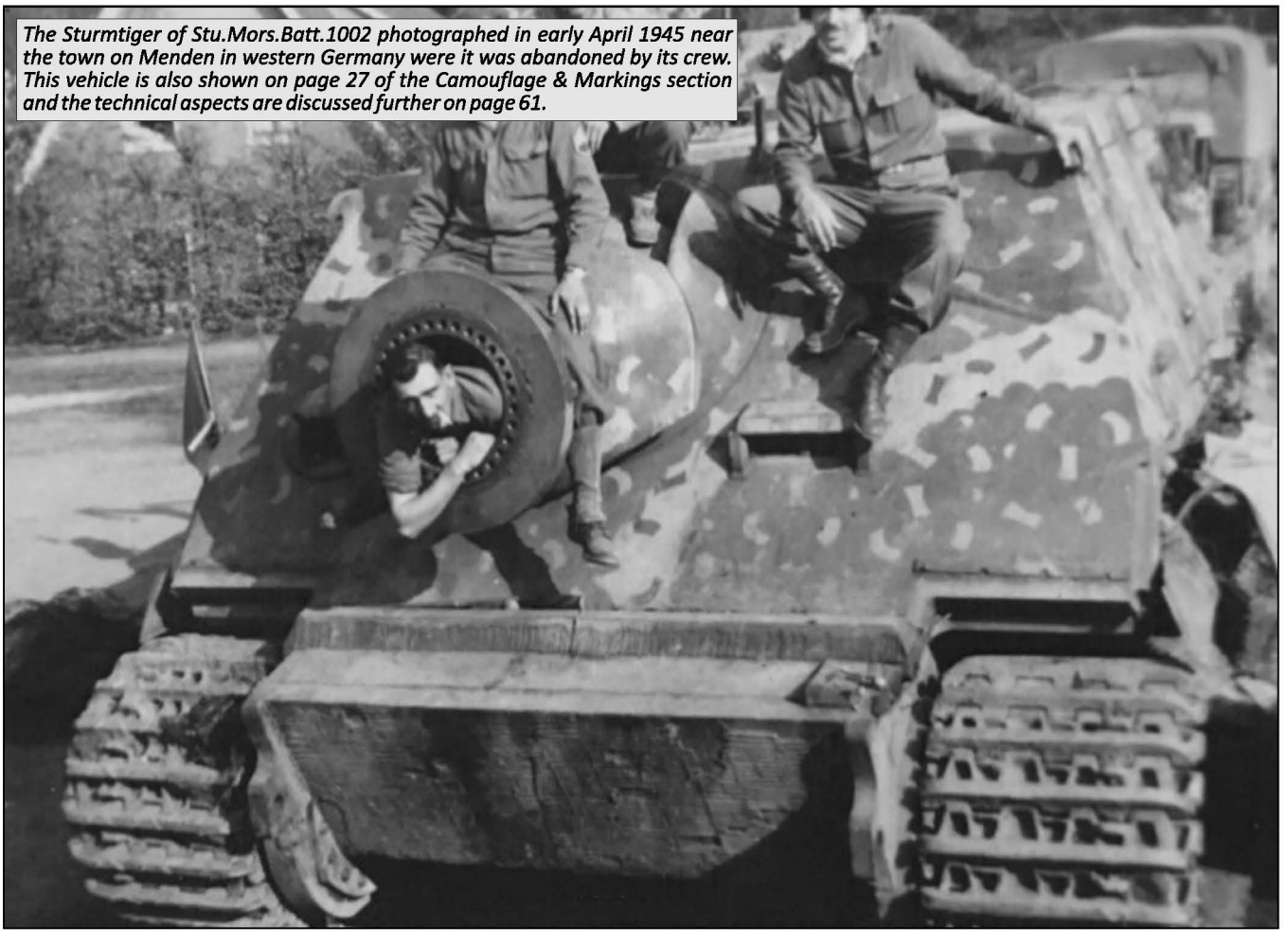
Formed on 22 October 1944, the first two Sturmtigers, Fgst Nr.250237 and 251174, were shipped from the HZA on Monday, 11 December with a further two sent from Sennelager on the following Wednesday. It is unclear when these vehicles arrived but Insp.d.Pz.Tr continued to report that only wheeled vehicles were on hand as late as 25 December. In January 1945 the company was subordinated directly to OB West and reported that four Sturmtigers were on hand.

On 23 January the company was renamed Sturm-Mörser-Batterie 1002 and transferred to the artillery inspectorate and the number of authorised vehicles was raised from four to six. Two additional Sturmtigers were received on some date after 5 February 1945, at which time the company reported that just three serviceable vehicles were available (3). As explained on page 63, these last deliveries must have been assembled in December 1944.

During the second week of February 1945 the Sturmtigers went into action for the first time when they supported elements of 1. Fallschirm-Armee in the Kleve area on the Lower Rhine. Here, the company was attached to 15.Panzergrenadier-Division and operated with the division's Panzerjäger-Abteilung firing on Allied positions in the area south and west of Pfalzdorf near the present-day Dutch

Notes

1. In Doll's account he stated that the track broke but photographs clearly show that the account given here is correct.
2. Karl Doll survived the war and contributed an account of his experiences to Kriegszeit und Kriegsende in Drolshagener Land.
3. With, presumably, one in repair.



The Sturmtiger of Stu.Mors.Batt.1002 photographed in early April 1945 near the town on Menden in western Germany were it was abandoned by its crew. This vehicle is also shown on page 27 of the Camouflage & Markings section and the technical aspects are discussed further on page 61.

On 11 April 1945 this Sturmtiger of Sturm-Mörs.Batt.1002 was heading towards the town of Calbe, about 20 kilometres south-east of Magdeburg, when 15 year-old Werner Schacke, a local resident, approached the vehicle. Herr Schacke later recalled clearly that five crewmen emerged from the Sturmtiger, and after offering him a trumpet, asked if they would be able to find any fuel in the town. Realising that they would not, an NCO fired a Panzerfaust at the side of the hull in an effort to disable the Sturmtiger, causing damage to the interior. Note the shape of the Kugelblende aperture and that the hull side extensions are of the later pattern.

border. Allied reports that eight Sturmtigers were involved in the fighting here are certainly incorrect and an after action report compiled by Generalleutnant Bayerlein stated that a total of five vehicles were operating in this area.

Towards the end of February the company was attached to Kampfgruppe Tebbe, made up for the most part from elements of 116.Panzer Division, and was deployed around Reinsberg where the company crossed the Rhine into Germany. The Sturmtigers took part in the fighting between Dorsten, Kirchhellen and Datteln and at that time the two platoons were split up. Retreating through Marl to Menden, one Sturmtiger was abandoned in mid-April 1945 in the Rauherfeld rock quarry, just to the south-east of the town centre after firing its last rounds at approaching US Army units.

Before the Americans could complete the encirclement of the Ruhr Pocket, three vehicles, with a total of 20 crewmen, managed to escape and had reached Rietberg on Sunday, 1 April 1945 and were in Hamelin, south-west of Hanover, by the following Tuesday. It was planned that these vehicles would be deployed with a Kampfgruppe that was to be raised from the remnants of the 116.Panzer Division and included a number of Panther tanks, Jagdpanzer 38 tank destroyers and captured US Army halftracks. Led by Major Friedrich-August Graf von Brühl, the Kampfgruppe conducted a fighting withdrawal to the Harz region in central Germany, a large mountainous area that extends across parts of Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Thuringia.

On 11 April 1945 a single Sturmtiger of Sturm-Mörs.Batt.1002 approached the town of Calbe, about 20 kilometres south-east of Magdeburg and east of the present-day Harz National Park, possibly after passing through Brumby. Less than 1 kilometre south-west of the Calbe town centre, along the An der Hospitalstrasse, the crew stopped to enquire of a local resident if any fuel was available in the area. On finding that it was not they decided to abandon the vehicle and an NCO fired a Panzerfaust at the right side of the hull, damaging the vehicle interior.

At about the same time, what was probably the company's last serviceable Sturmtiger, was abandoned about 1 kilometre south-east of Ebendorf, today a northern suburb of Magdeburg, near the

Ebendorfer Chausee overpass. The vehicle was said to have been hidden in the entrance to a coal mine and only emerged to fire but appeared to be in good condition. Ebendorf is about 25 kilometres south of Calbe and shows how the company was widely dispersed in the last days of the war.

This does not, however, account for all five vehicles mention in Bayerlein's report and the fate of at least one Sturmtiger caught in the Ruhr Pocket fighting and another of Kampfgruppe Brühl is unknown.

Kampfgruppe Brühl

Formed in early April 1945, this ad-hoc formation was raised from elements of 116.Panzer-Div that had been able to escape from the Ruhr Pocket and training units from Bergen. The Kampfgruppe was supposed to contain a number of armoured vehicles including four Sturmtigers and this is discussed on the previous page

Kampfgruppe Prein

Probably formed in late March 1945, this ad-hoc formation was commanded by Oberleutnant Peter Prein who had been attached to the headquarters company of Panzer-Regiment 3, 2.Panzer-Division. The Kampfgruppe is said to have controlled a number of Pzkpfw IV and Panther tanks and at least one Sturmtiger. Oberleutnant Prein's group withdrew through Kornbach, north-east of Bayreuth in southern Germany, through Roslau, Bergnersreuth and eventually east to Waldsassen on the modern-day Czech border. It has been suggested that the Sturmtiger was later caught up in the retreat of 13.SS-Armeekorps, or at least elements of that formation which was withdrawing towards Austria, and found its way to Frontenhausen, a small town about 70 kilometres north-east of Munich.

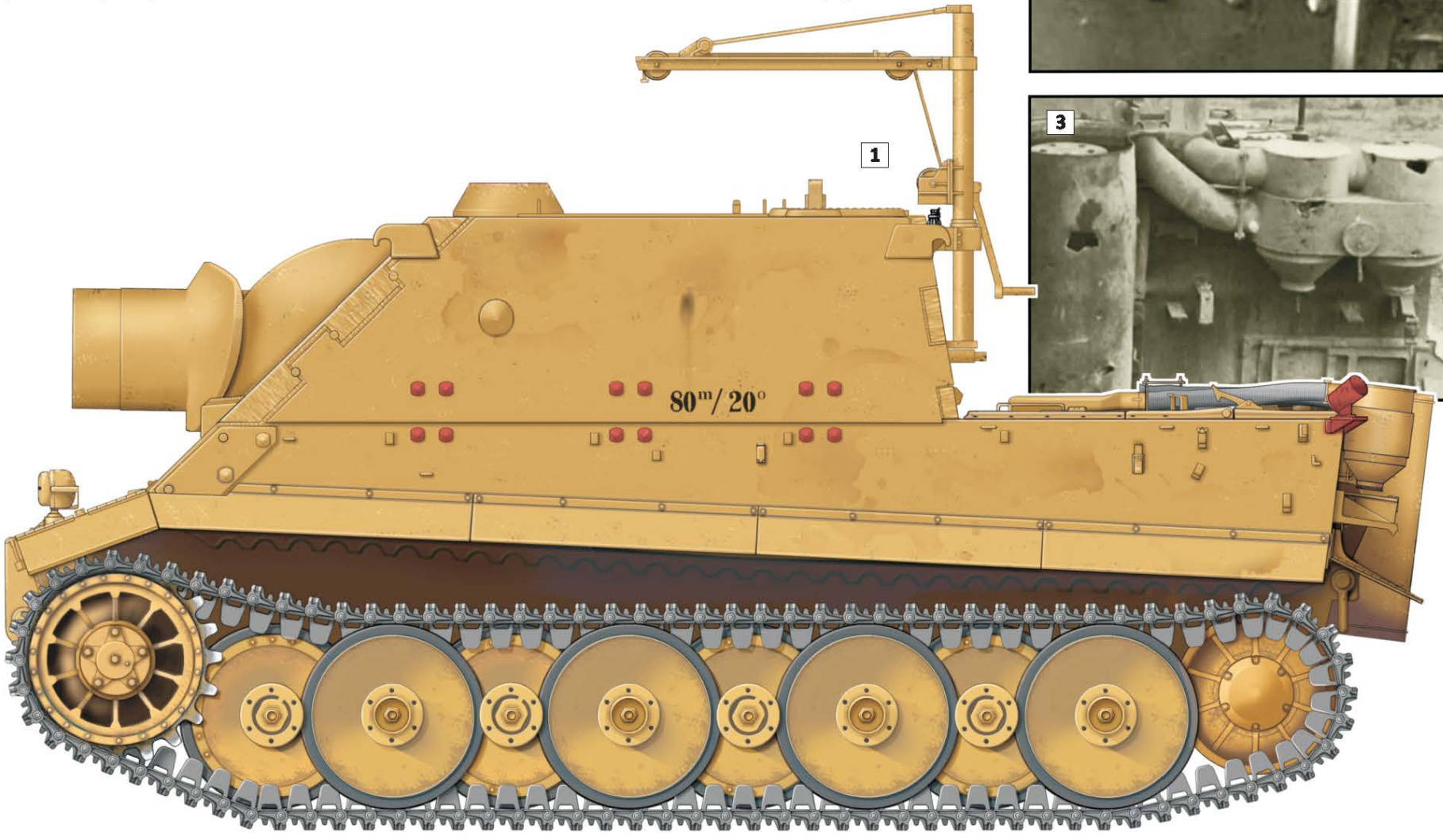
A number of post-war accounts by the town's inhabitants state that the German units that occupied the town in late April and early May 1945 included a number of Waffen-SS men who were preparing to resist the approaching Americans, much to the consternation of the locals. The Sturmtiger was the last vehicle of a convoy when it crashed through the Dingolfinger Strasse bridge on the northern edge of the town and a photograph of the partly-submerged vehicle is shown on page 16. To enable them to rebuild the bridge, US Army engineers attempted to move the Sturmtiger with explosives but succeeded only in overturning it.

Some years later it was righted and eventually broken up for scrap. The Frontenhausen Sturmtiger may have been one of the vehicles assigned to Stu.Mors.Batt 1001 in late 1944, which was later attached to an ad-hoc Kampfgruppe, but any definitive identification is not possible.

The Sturmtiger found near Ebensdorf in April 1945. This vehicle is discussed in some detail on page 60 and is also shown in the Camouflage & Markings section on page 26.

Photographed just to the north of the town centre of Frontenhausen, with the repaired bridge over the River Vils on Dingolfinger Strasse in the background, this Sturmtiger is something of a mystery. The location was confirmed in 2010 by three of the boys depicted in this image who still lived in the town at that time. By a strange coincidence the driver was related to Frau Brandhuber, the wife of the local mayor, who hid him until the town was surrendered to units of the US Army. Frau Brandhuber was adamant that a number of armoured vehicles crossed the original bridge without incident but that the Sturmtiger, which was the last in line, crashed through into the river. It seems that this vehicle was transported by train to Dingolfing, about 12 kilometres north of Frontenhausen, after being diverted from Landshut which was occupied by the Allies. From there the Sturmtiger, on its own tracks, headed south towards Marklkofen but found that the bridge at Frontenhausen offered the only means to cross the Vils.

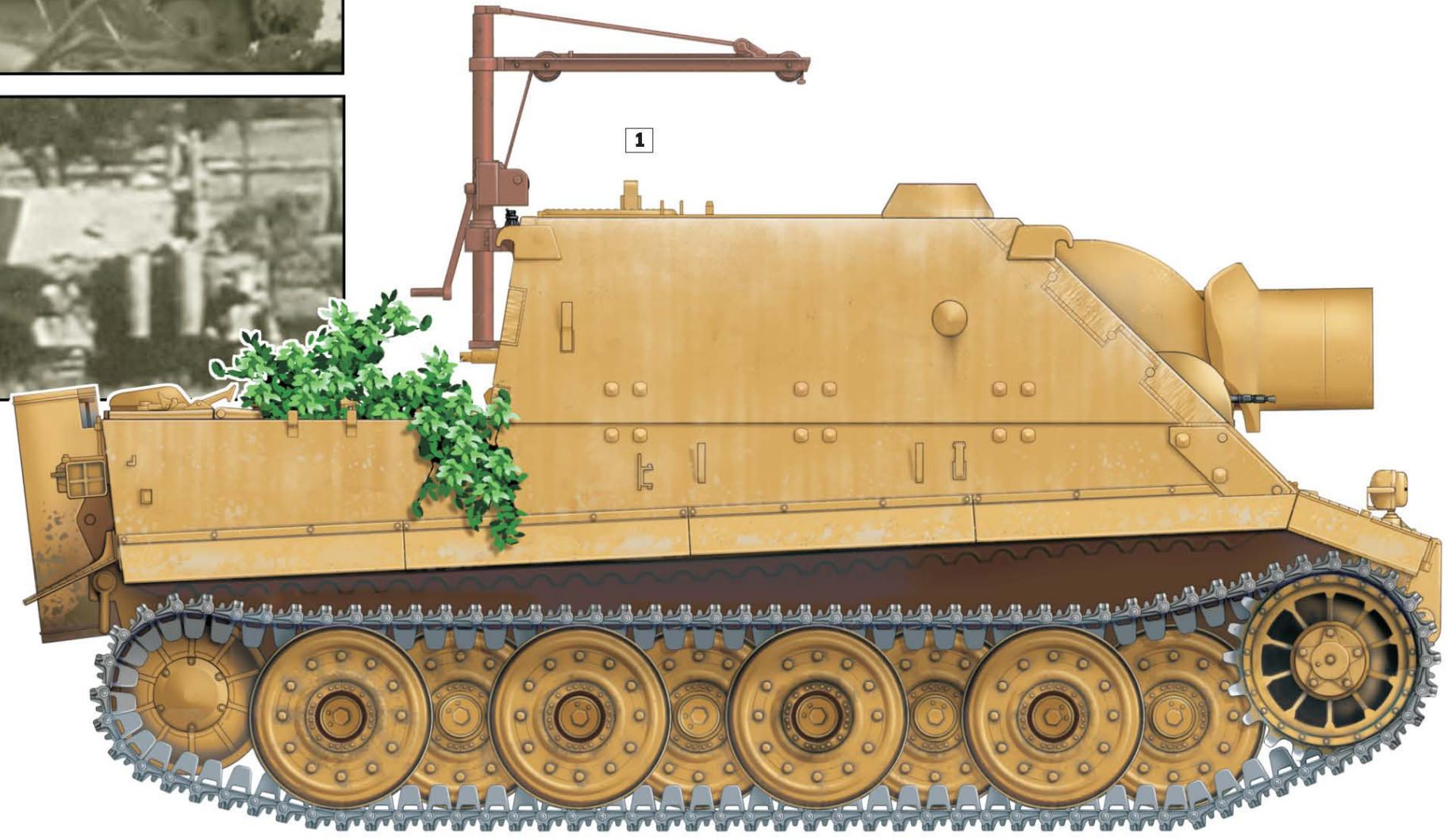
1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Germany, October 1943. This illustration depicts the prototype vehicle as it was presented to Hitler at Truppenübungsplatz Arys in East Prussia but with the outer row of road wheels removed and narrow tracks, or Verladeketten, fitted in preparation for rail transport. The superstructure was built as a trial version, described as cast iron but probably of mild-steel construction. The numbers on the superstructure side and at the front (2) indicate the armour thickness and the inclination of the plate. They were almost certainly removed before the vehicle was shipped to Poland. The 38cm rocket launcher was fully operational. The armoured mantlet, with its squared-off lower edge, was probably unique to this vehicle. The chassis was built after April 1943 but some time before the following August when the application of Zimmerit anti-magnetic mine paste was introduced. It was fitted with a complete Feifel air-filtering system with the simplified chambers (3) that were incorporated into Tiger I production from March 1943. The complete assembly was painted in RAL 7028 Dunkelgelb but some parts, such as the bolt covers on the hull side and the S-mine launchers at the rear were a decidedly darker shade which I have assumed is RAL 3009 Oxidrot, a commonly used primer. This vehicle is also examined in the Technical Details and Modifications section on page 55.

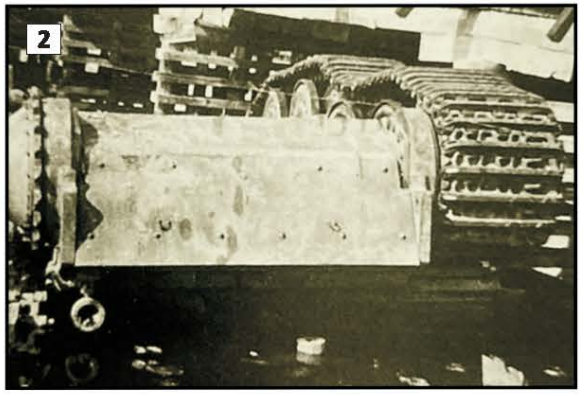


2

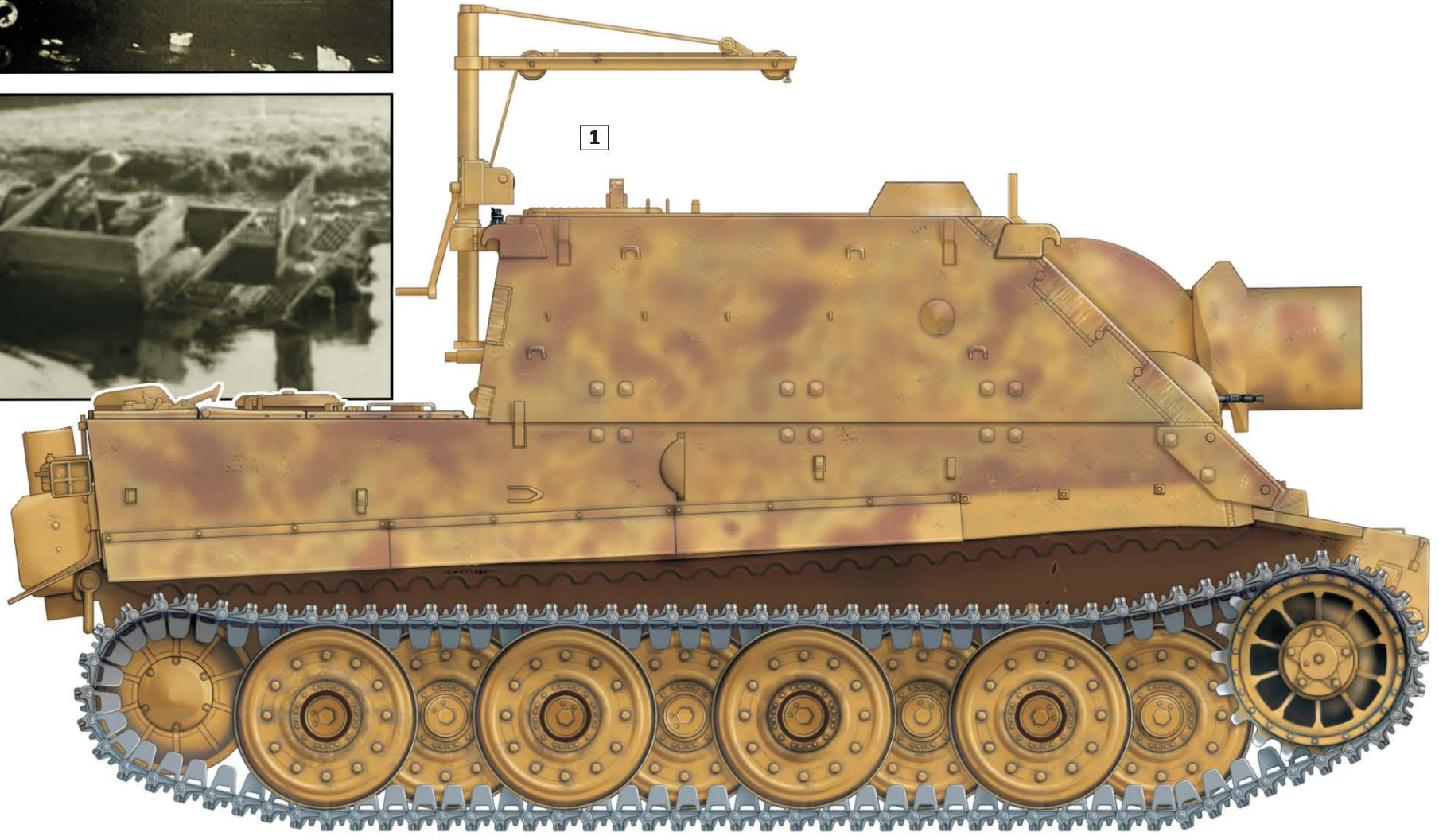
3

1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Poland, autumn 1944. As explained in the unit histories, just two of these vehicles took part in the suppression of the Warsaw Uprising and both were August 1944 production models. Our illustration is partly speculative as no clear image of either Sturmtiger exists. In particular, the barrel counterweight, or at least the lugs that supported it, may have been in use at this time but it is impossible to make any definitive judgement based on the evidence we have. Note that the ammunition crane is painted in a very dark colour, possibly Oxidrot primer, and this can be seen in the first of our photographs (2) as can the single L-shaped hanger on the superstructure side. Note also that the crane is painted in the same shade as the hull and superstructure in the next photograph (3) and I consider this sufficient to indicate that we are looking at two different vehicles, Fgst Nr.250091 and Fgst Nr.250320. Both are coated in RAL 7028 Dunkelgelb as they were built just prior to the introduction of factory-applied camouflage schemes. There are faint traces visible in both photographs of what could be a disruptive pattern but it could just as easily be dirt or dust and I will leave any final decision to the reader.

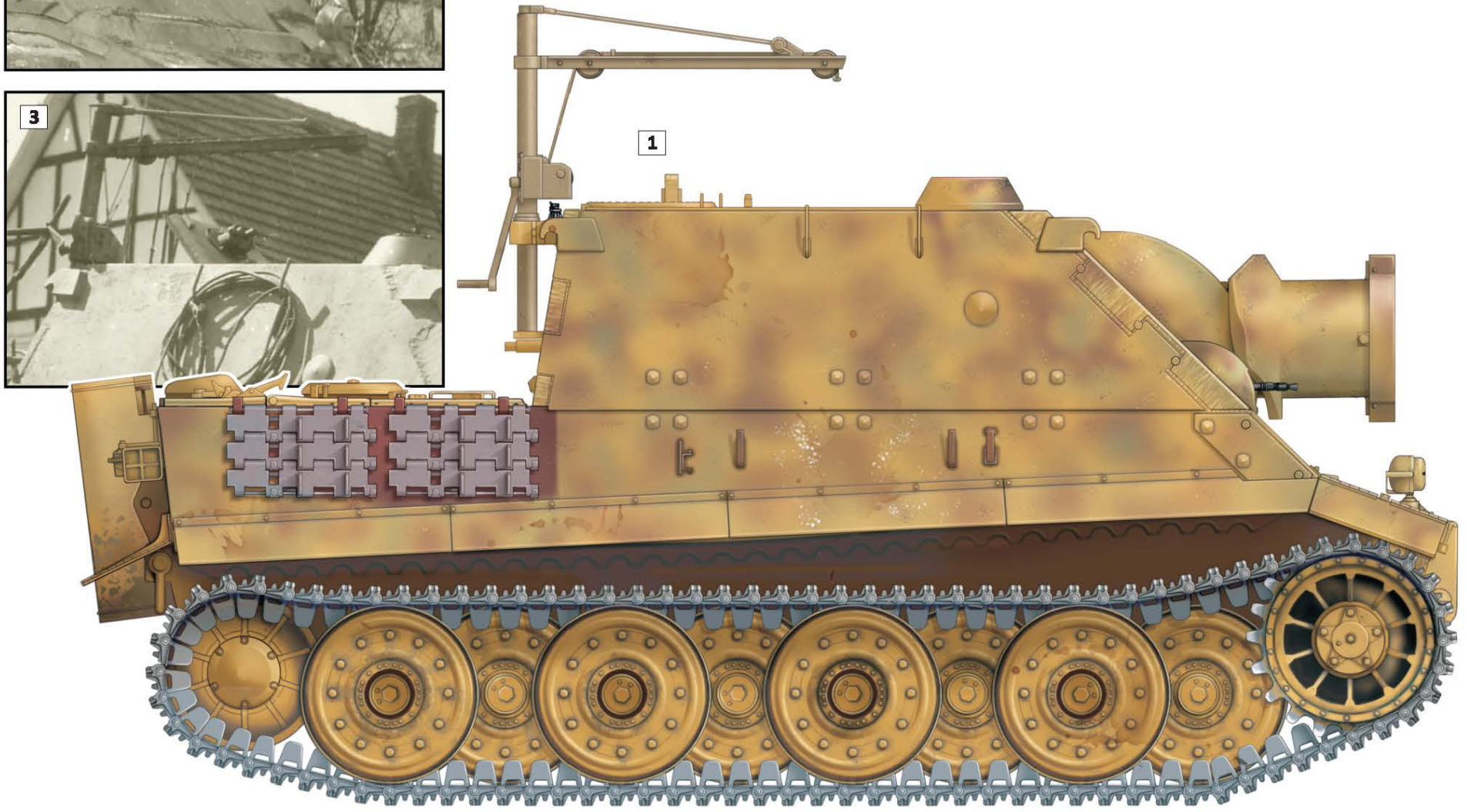

1

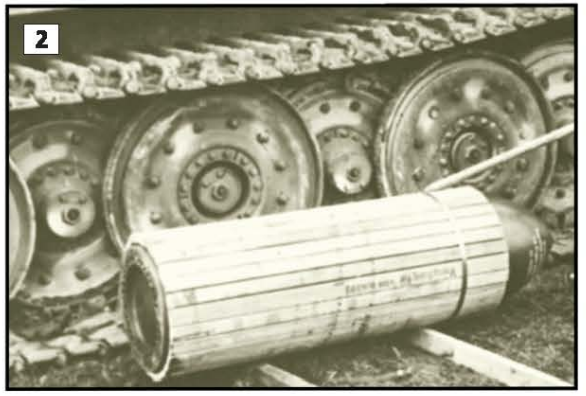


1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Unit unknown. Germany, spring 1945. Abandoned on the northern outskirts of Frontenhausen, a small town in southern Germany, this vehicle sat in the shallow River Vils for many years meaning that any interpretation of the camouflage scheme is somewhat speculative. But enough photographs remain to enable a reasonably accurate depiction to be made of the technical features and these are also examined on page 56. Note that the frontal additional armour plate is fixed in place by small bolts, identical to the vehicle shown on the following page, and also has two small metal loops welded directly to the plate (2). Although badly damaged and stripped of much of the superstructure (3) the early-pattern armour cover for the submersible equipment is still visible. Although we may never be certain as to which unit this vehicle belonged, the typically early features such as the small bolts on the hull front armour plate, the lack of the metal lugs on the barrel, the proliferation of small loops and hooks on the superstructure sides and the placement of the shovel on the right side of the hull point to a September-produced vehicle. It could be one of the four Sturmtigers originally assigned to Sturm-Mörser-Batterie 1001 in October 1944 but that is highly debatable.

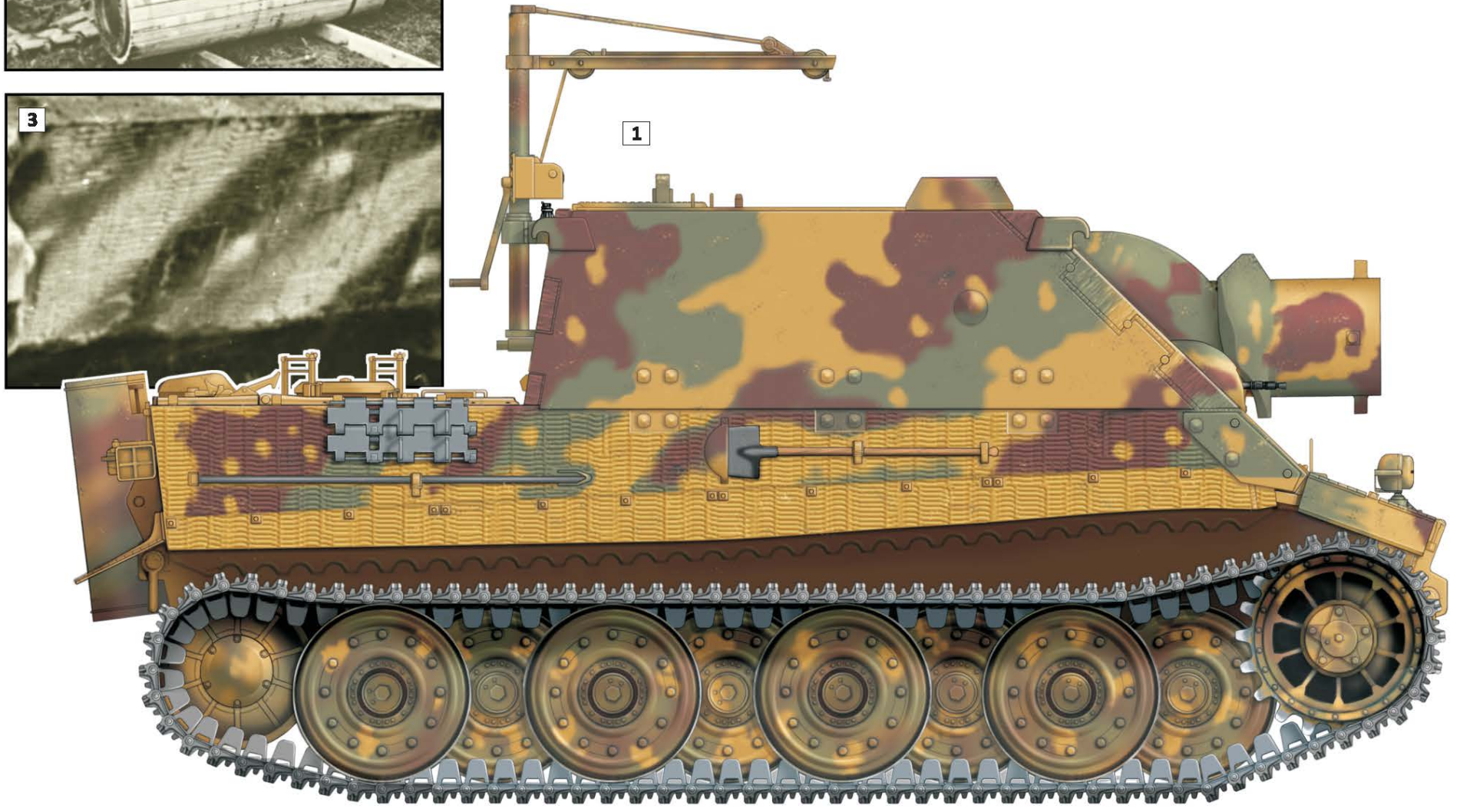


1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Sturm-Mörser-Kompanie 1001. Germany, spring 1945. Abandoned in Hützmert in western Germany during the fighting in the Ruhr Pocket, the story of this vehicle and its crew is related in the unit histories. The company's four Sturmtigers, all shipped in October 1944, are known to have been assembled in the previous September and the mottled camouflage scheme, depicted here as RAL 8017 Rotbraun and RAL 6003 Olivgrün on a base coat of Dunkelgelb, would suggest that this vehicle was converted very early in the month before factory-applied camouflage schemes became standard. It was probably at this time that the barrel counterweight (2) was introduced into production although it is noticeably absent on vehicles thought to have been assembled at a later date and it may be that supplies were limited. Note the simple L-shaped hangers on the superstructure sides (3) and the rather rudimentary tool clasps on the hull side which seem to have been painted in a very dark colour, possible Oxidrot primer, as is the ammunition crane and parts of the hull towards the rear. This period also saw the introduction of spare track links and they were probably carried on both sides although just a right side and front view of this vehicle have survived. See also page 56.

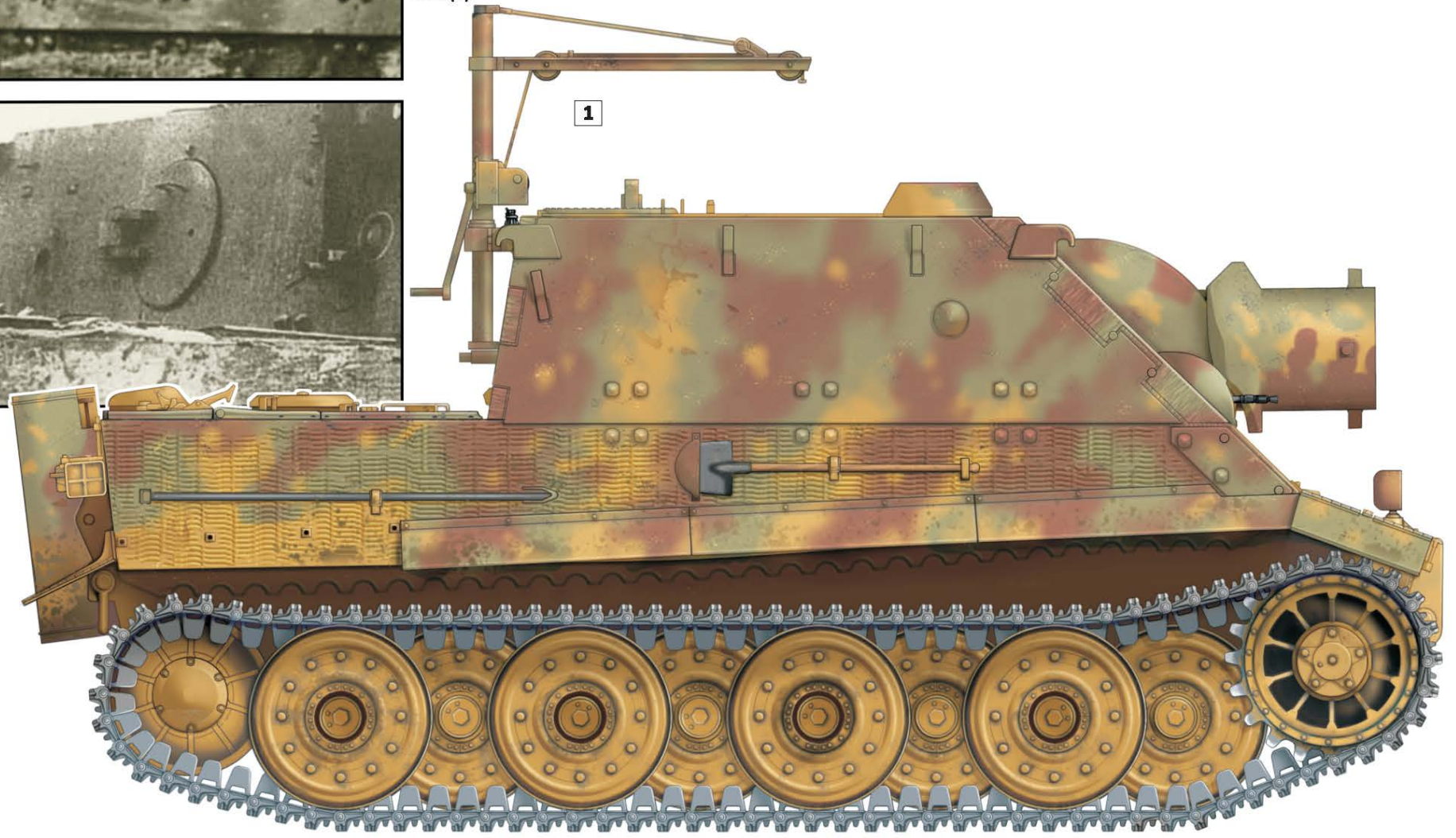




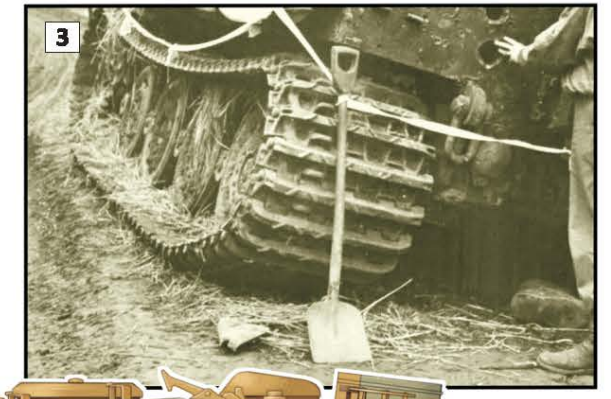
1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Unit unknown. Germany, autumn 1944. Said to have been photographed at the Sennelager training facility in October 1944, images of this vehicle were reproduced in a wartime training manual. As early as 19 August of the same year the Heereswaffenamt ordered that units in the field were no longer to apply camouflage patterns to their vehicles and instead they would be painted before leaving the factory. The very neatly applied camouflage scheme depicted here is similar, although not identical, to that seen on a number of Sturmgeschütz III assault guns in the autumn and winter of 1944 and it will be remembered that both types were assembled at Alkett in Berlin. While the scheme shown here may not be the first factory-applied pattern I feel that it was certainly a very early attempt given the technical features of the vehicle, especially the brackets on the engine deck which begin to appear at about this time. Note that it has been applied when the trackguards were in place and, rather unusually, it extends to the wheels as can be seen in our photograph (2). The Zimmerit anti-magnetic mine paste on the hull front and sides has a texture and finish typical of Tiger I tanks assembled by Henschel and is almost certainly an original production feature. Note that large squares of the paste seem to have been deliberately removed from the hull front (3). See also page 57.

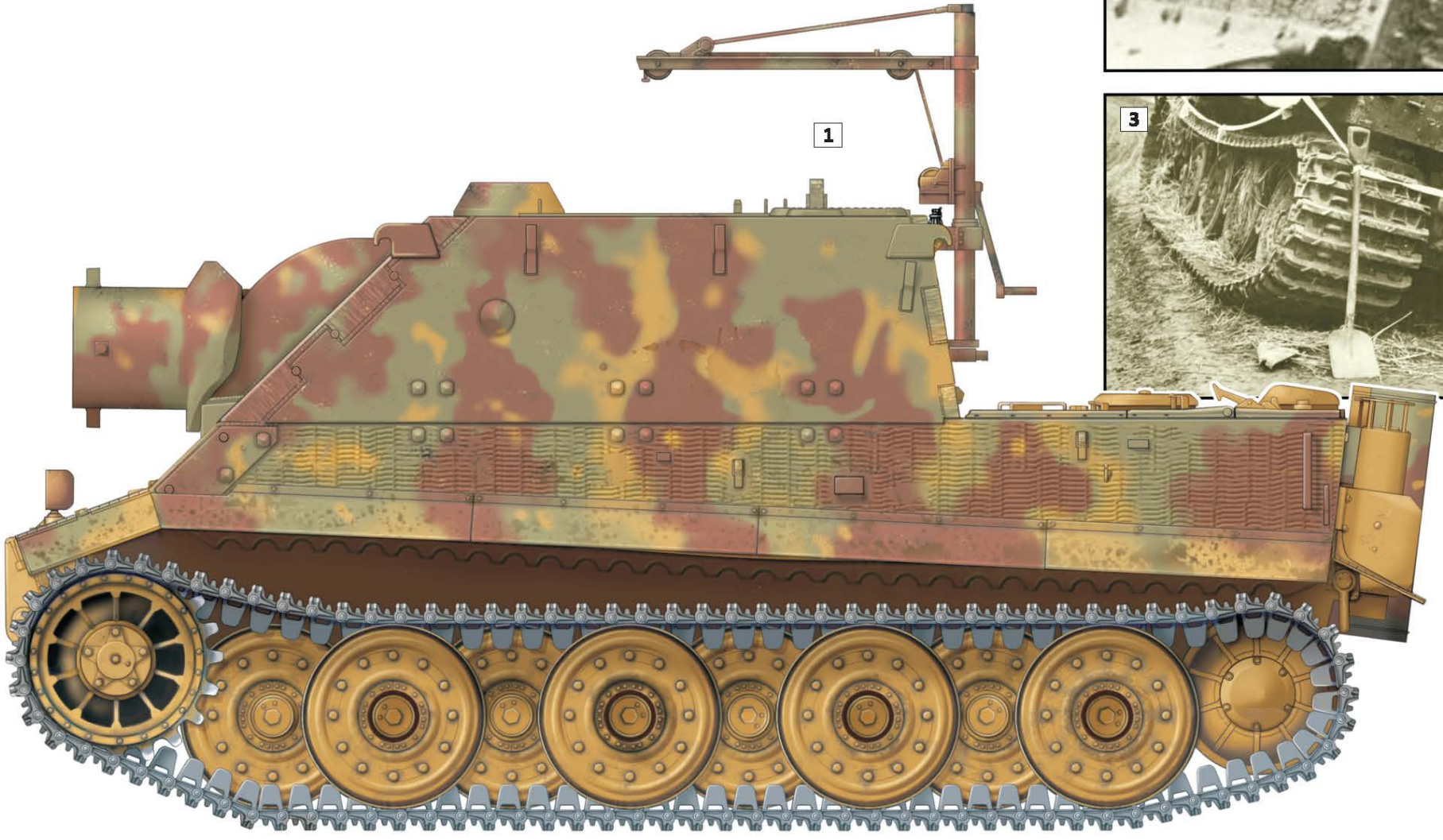


1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Sturm-Mörser-Kompanie 1000. Germany, spring 1945. Disabled by units of the US Army and abandoned by its crew in the town of Oberembt in western Germany near the Belgian border, this vehicle was photographed from many angles which has allowed us to create a reasonably accurate depiction of the technical details and camouflage scheme, although the later was badly worn and dusty. This Sturmtiger may represent the next step in production as hangers for spare track links are longer fitted to the hull sides but may have been moved to the superstructure rear, as can be seen on page 58, and large L-shaped hangers are now welded to the superstructure sides as standard. The camouflage pattern is similar to the vehicle depicted on page 21 but the edges of the darker shapes are far softer in most places. Again, an effort has been made to conceal the lugs on the barrel and generally break up its silhouette. The pattern is made up of patches of Rotbraun and Olivgrün painted over the Dunkelgelb base coat with spots of the latter painted onto the darker shapes (2). The hangers on the superstructure sides were quite easily damaged, as can be seen from our photograph, and it is unlikely that they were intended to hold spare track links although those fitted to the superstructure rear certainly did. The rear access hatch is now fitted with a horizontally-aligned handle as shown here (3).

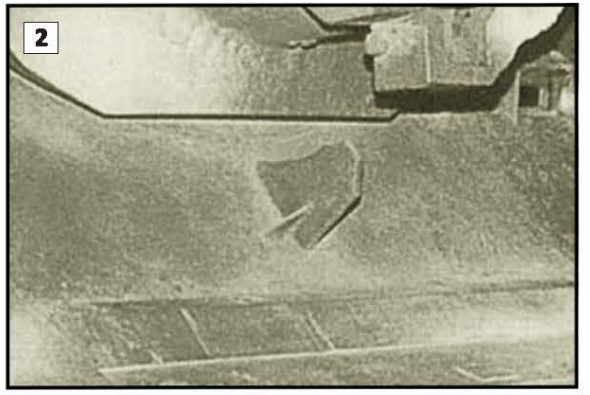


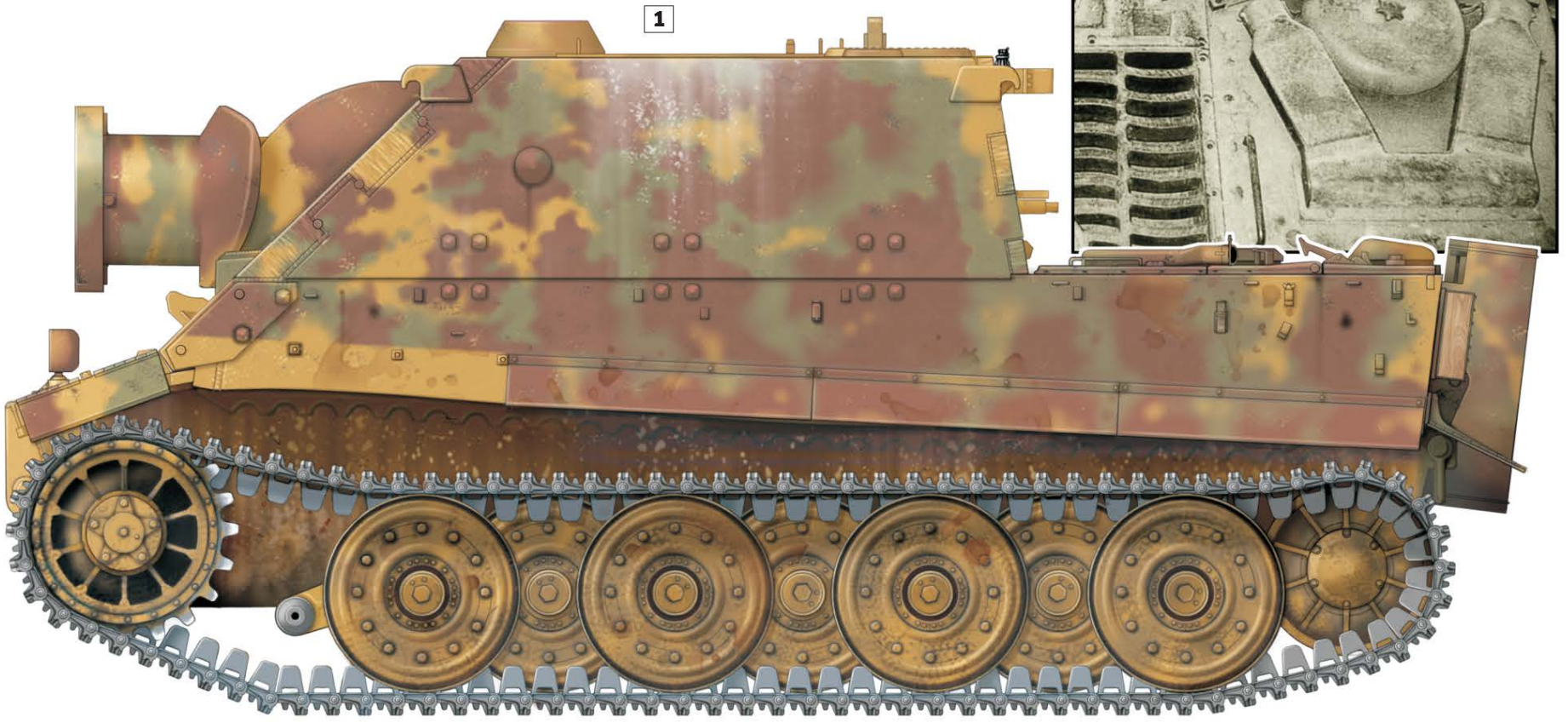
1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Sturm-Mörser-Kompanie 1000. Germany, spring 1945. Our illustration depicts the vehicle shown on the previous page from the left side. Again, it is obvious that the disruptive camouflage has been painted with the intention of disguising the general silhouette, especially the barrel. In addition to the hangers welded to the superstructure side, the long-handled shovel has been moved from the right side of the hull and is now held in place by a large bracket (2). Note that there is also a small, L-shaped hanger towards the rear of the hull. Curiously, the large bracket is also fitted to the vehicle depicted on page 28 which also had the more complex shovel storage arrangement. The shovel itself is presumably the item shown propped against the track (3) and secured with the engineer's tape. Again, the Zimmerit coating is very worn but has been painted over, confirming that it was a feature of the original hull when it was first assembled. As mentioned elsewhere, it seems that Zimmerit was not applied to any of the Sturmtiger conversions, including the prototype (see pages 17 and 26) and August production vehicles, but was retained if the Tiger I had been coated with the paste. It is difficult to be certain but it appears that the ammunition crane is also painted in the camouflage colours. See also pages 57 and 58.



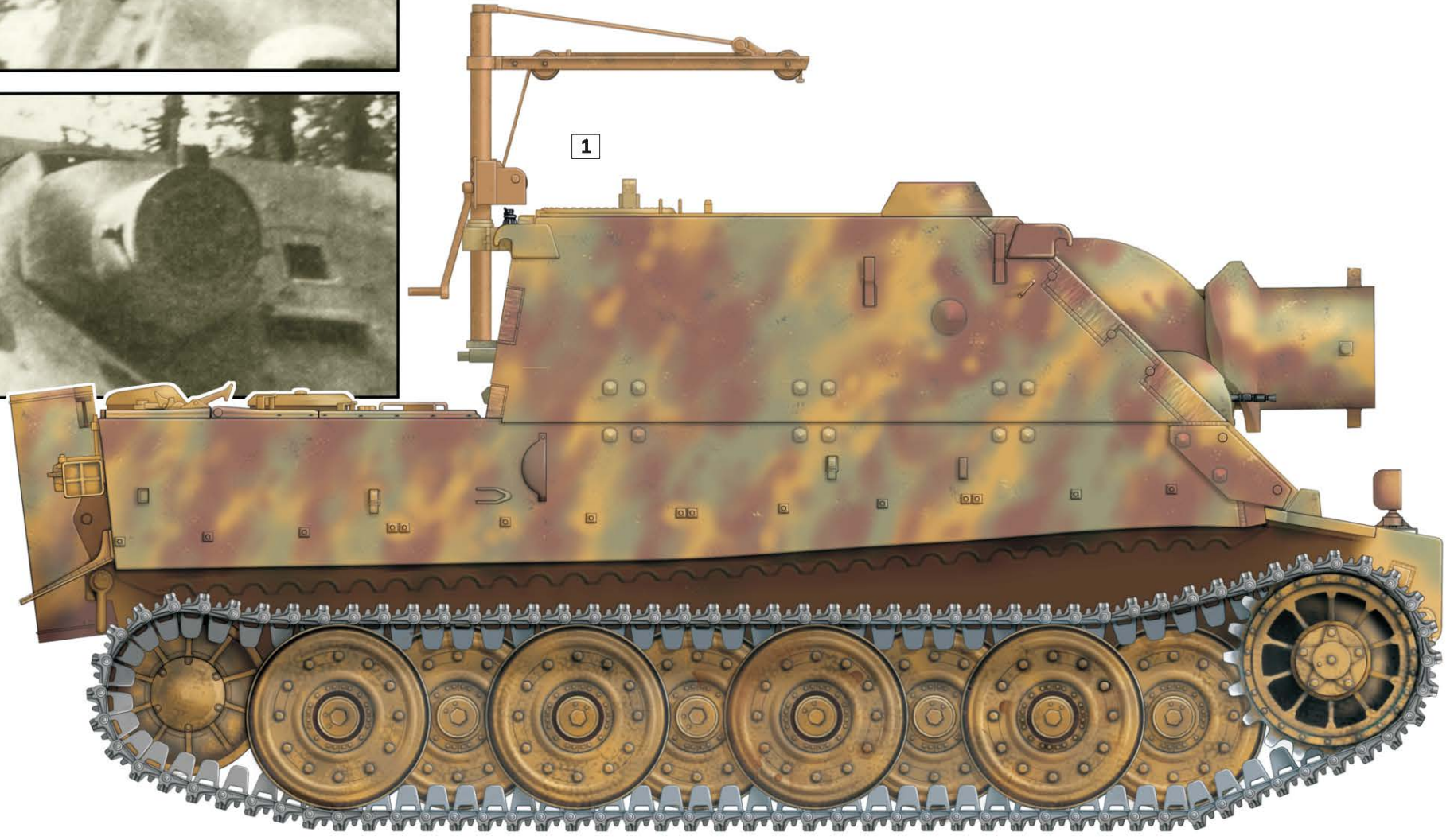


1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Germany, spring 1945. In the last days of the war this vehicle was abandoned in the small town of Rogäsen, almost at the limit of the Soviet advance. It was subsequently moved to the Brandenburg Eisenwerke plant at Kirchmöser and from there to Kubinka near Moscow where it remains. This is without doubt the prototype Sturmtiger with the addition of a barrel counterweight and photographs of the vehicle in this configuration are reproduced on pages 4, 5 and 7. At some time after its return from Warsaw in August 1944 the counterweight was added as was the metal flange (2) on the superstructure front. This was probably intended to limit the degree to which the launcher could be depressed. The engine deck duct of the Feifel air-filtering system was still in place (3) in 1945 but the flexible tubes and chambers that were mounted on the rear hull were gone. When the vehicle was captured by the Red Army the ammunition crane was also missing but notice that the tool and cable clamps and catches are still in place on the hull side. The camouflage scheme is extremely complex and badly worn but I have done my best to replicate it here. It has since been repainted in a scheme vaguely similar to the Sturmtiger depicted on pages 24 and 25 but the present markings are completely fanciful. Note that the first road wheel is missing as it was in May 1945. See also page 59.

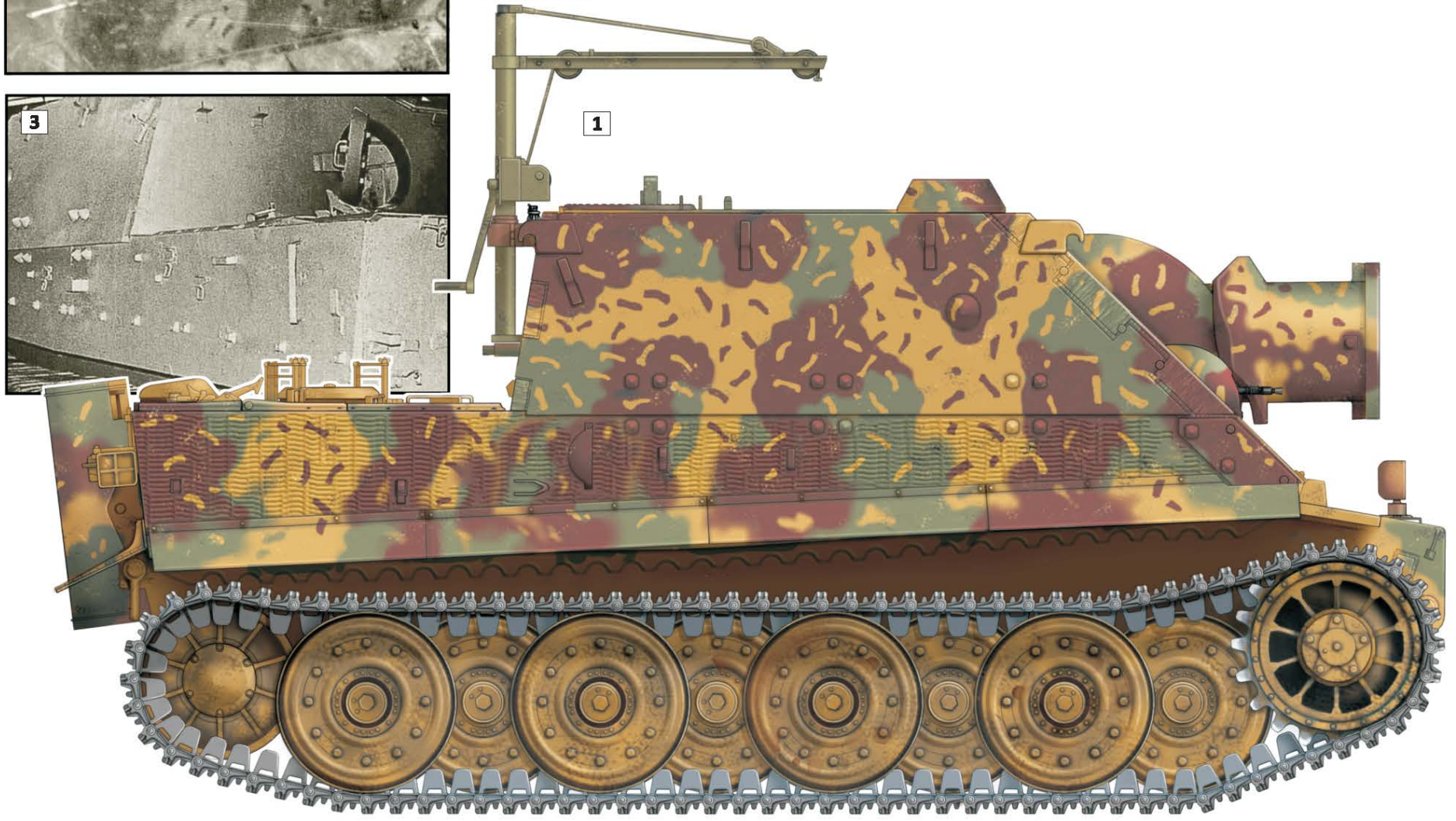




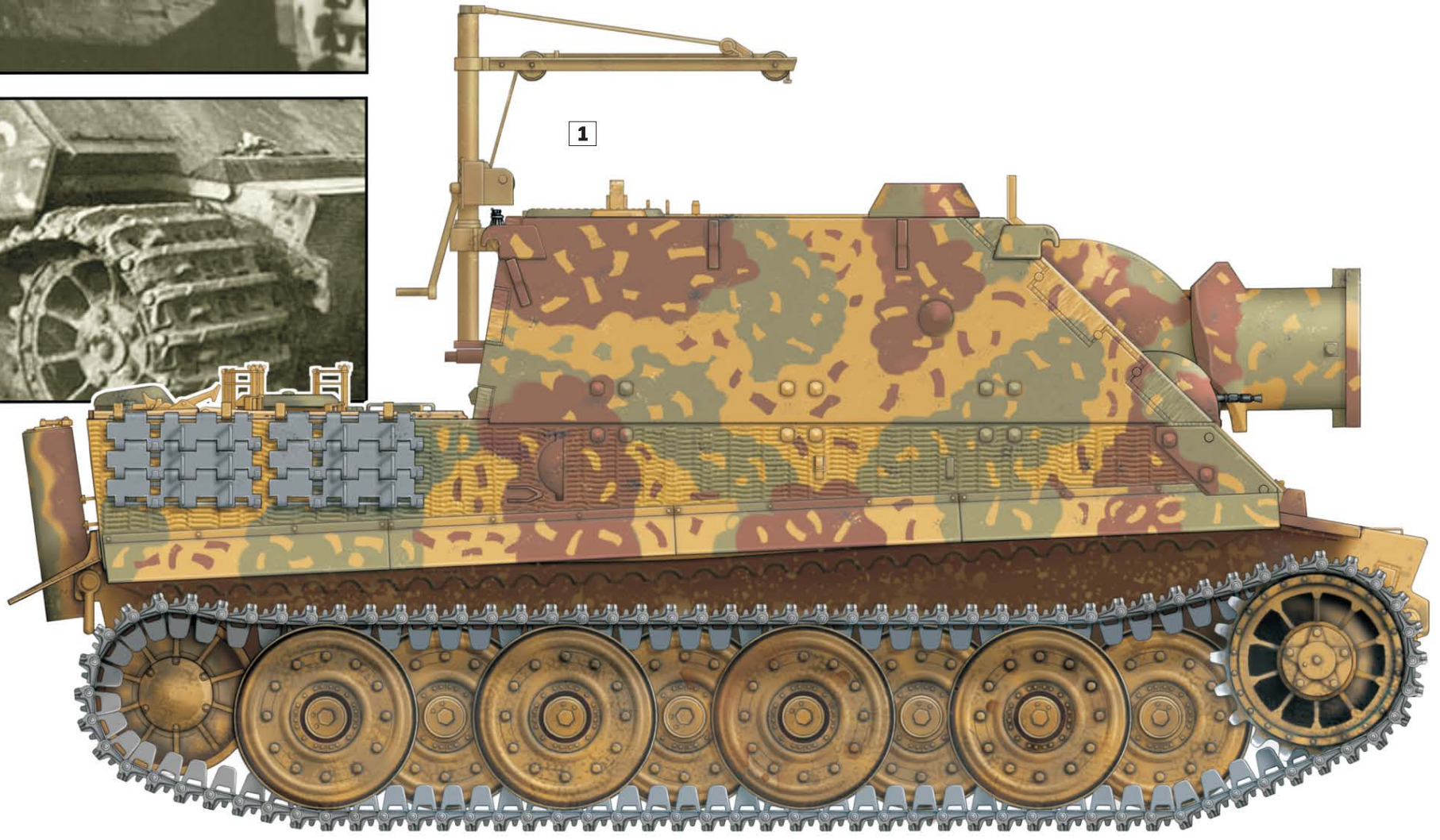
1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Unit unknown. Germany, spring 1945. Found near the small town of Lichtentanne in eastern Germany, this Sturmtiger may have been one of the vehicles which was assigned to Sturm-Mörser-Batterie 1001 and later found its way there as part of an ad-hoc Kampfgruppe. The camouflage scheme is similar to that of the Sturmtiger depicted on pages 24 and 25 with large dots of Dunkelgelb painted over the darker patches of Rotbraun and Olivgrün. The edges of the camouflage patches are very soft and mottled except those on the barrel which tend towards a more defined line. This is slightly speculative on my part as only a single, rather unclear, photograph of this vehicle exists. The placement of the long-handled shovel and crowbar on the hull right side would suggest a slightly earlier production date than the Sturmtiger lost at Oberembt as would the two, rather irregularly located, L-shaped hangers (2) on the superstructure side. Note the small metal loop welded to the superstructure just forward of the first hanger. Note also the total absence of Zimmerit. As was common, there is no barrel counterweight although the supporting lugs (3) have been fitted. See also page 59.



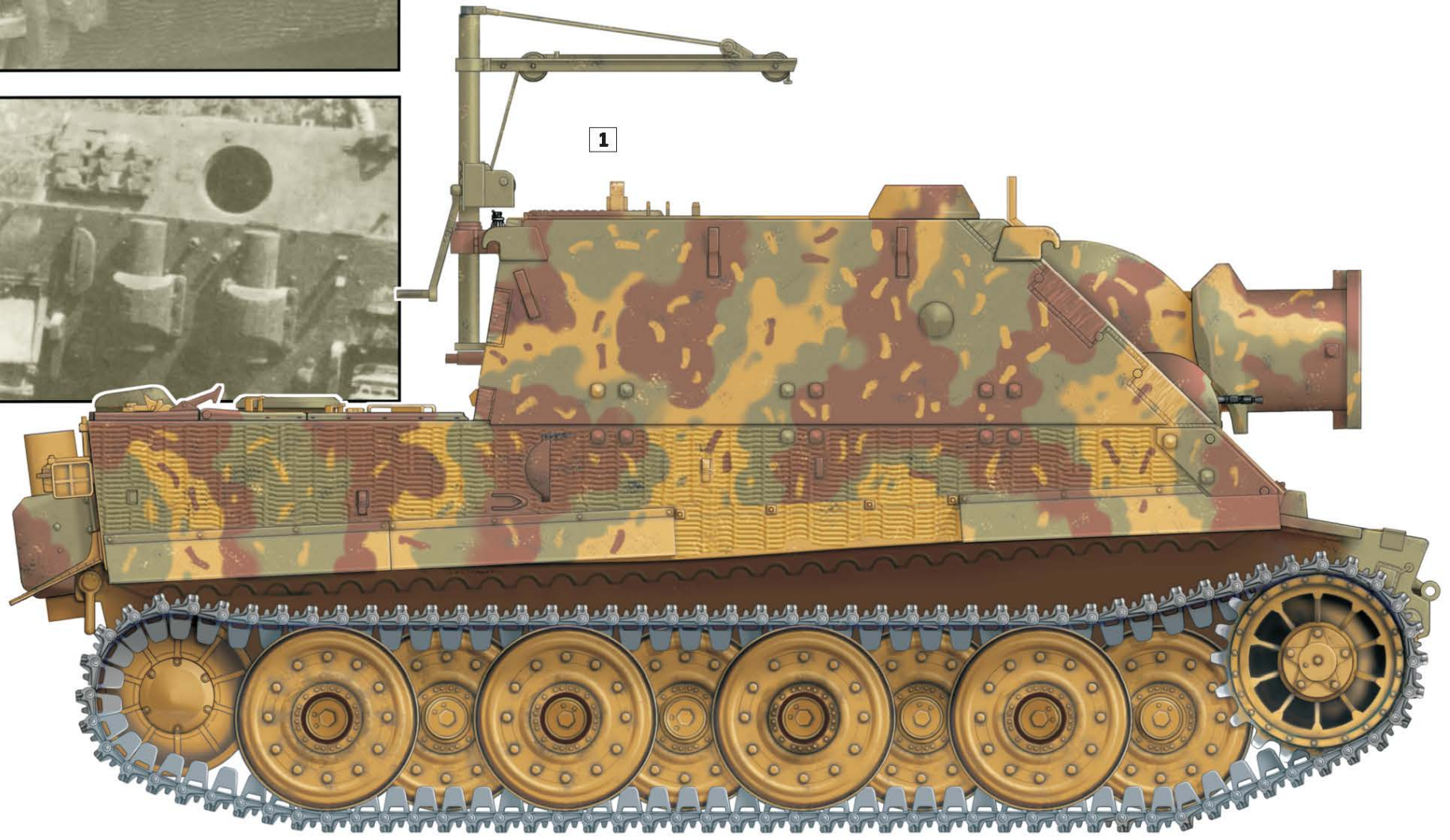
1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Sturm-Mörser-Batterie 1000. Germany, spring 1945. Abandoned near the town of Ebendorf in eastern Germany, this Sturmtiger was assigned to the company in December 1944. Three of this unit's Sturmtigers have been positively identified in contemporary photographs and all are finished in elaborate factory-applied camouflage patterns which bear a striking similarity, albeit with small differences. These schemes may be indicative of the last of the September 1944 production models. The base coat of Dunkelgelb was maintained and is here covered with large patches of Rotbraun and Olivgrün applied, in most areas, with a hard edge superficially similar to the so-called disc pattern encountered in photographs of Pzkpfw V Panther tanks assembled in late 1944. Irregular shapes in contrasting colours were then painted over the entire vehicle (2). These may have been applied with a stencil, as they were with other types, but I have been unable to discern any pattern from the available photographs. Note that this vehicle retains the holder and clasps for the long-handled shovel on the right side of the hull (2) and the same bracket arrangement as the Sturmtiger lost at Oberembt on the left side (3). Note also that the handle of the rear access hatch is now fitted vertically. This vehicle is today on display at the Deutsches Panzermuseum at Munster and its complicated history is explained on page 60.



1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Sturm-Mörser-Batterie 1000. Germany, spring 1945. Abandoned near Menden in western Germany, this vehicle is finished in a factory camouflage scheme which is essentially the same as the Sturmtiger shown on the previous page although it differs in small details. The edges of the large patches of Dunkelgelb, Rotbraun and Olivgrün are of a more pronounced scallop-shape while the contrasting strokes are somewhat thicker. Some of the latter appear to have been painted using a stencil and have abrupt contours while others are more rounded and were probably applied randomly with a brush. This vehicle is fitted with the hangers and spare track links on the right side of the hull side, but not the left, a feature of earlier production Sturmtigers. The holder and clasp for the long-handled shovel is also retained on the right side. The three L-shaped hangers on the superstructure sides are now standard. The Zimmerit coating is very worn and chipped, as can be seen from our photograph (2) and notice that in this case it was applied to the splash guard. On later production vehicles the track guards were squared-off at the front and not elongated to fit the fender (3). The hull front extensions are the notched variety which were introduced into production in December 1943 or January 1944. See also page 61.



1. Panzer Sturm-Mörser 38cm 'Tiger' Sdkfz 181. Sturm-Mörser-Batterie 1000. Germany, spring 1945. Recovered near the town of Calbe in April 1945, this Sturmtiger is finished in the same style of factory camouflage as the vehicles shown on the previous two pages. But here the overall scheme appears somewhat clumsy and hurried, with many of the patches of Rotbraun and Olivgrün being almost transparent. The small lozenges of contrasting colour have in some places been applied randomly with a brush, many having a somewhat cartoonish bone-shape, while others have been sprayed. In the other schemes these contrasting shapes rarely crossed the larger patches but here it is common. The hull extension are the notched variety and feature an unusual metal ring (2) which is probably a field modification. Despite the apparent fragility of the superstructure's L-shaped hangers, mentioned elsewhere in this section, those fitted to the rear of the superstructure have been used to hold three spare track links (3), an accumulated weight of about 100 kilograms. Note also the large C-hook. Although the ammunition crane is missing in the available photographs of this Sturmtiger I have included it here. The colour is completely speculative. See also page 61.



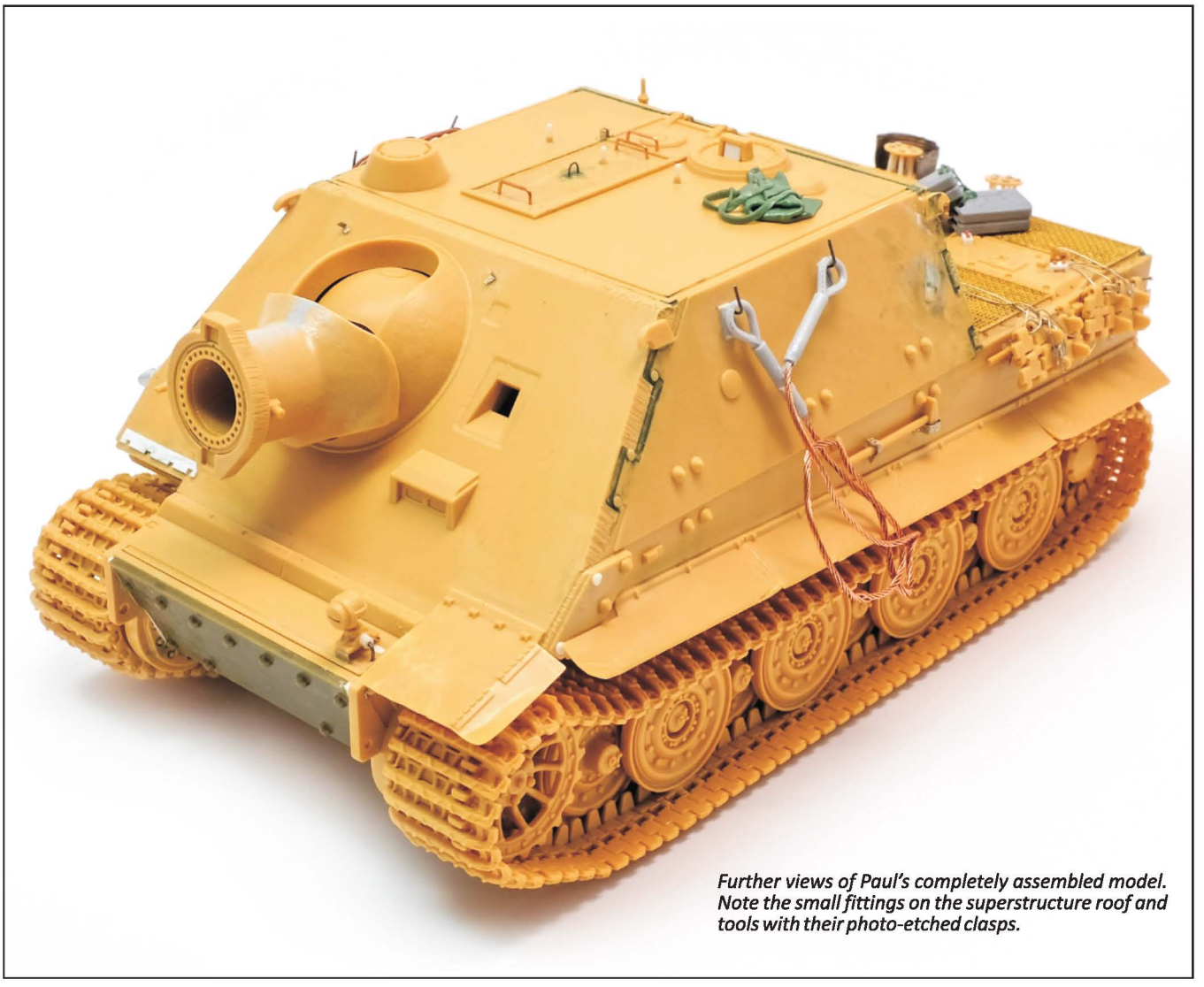
PANZER STURM-MÖRSER 38CM 'TIGER'

STURMTIGER

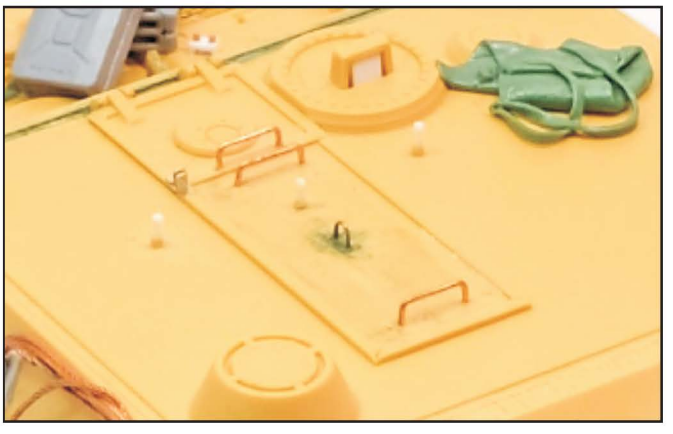
PAUL KESTENBAUM

1/48 SCALE

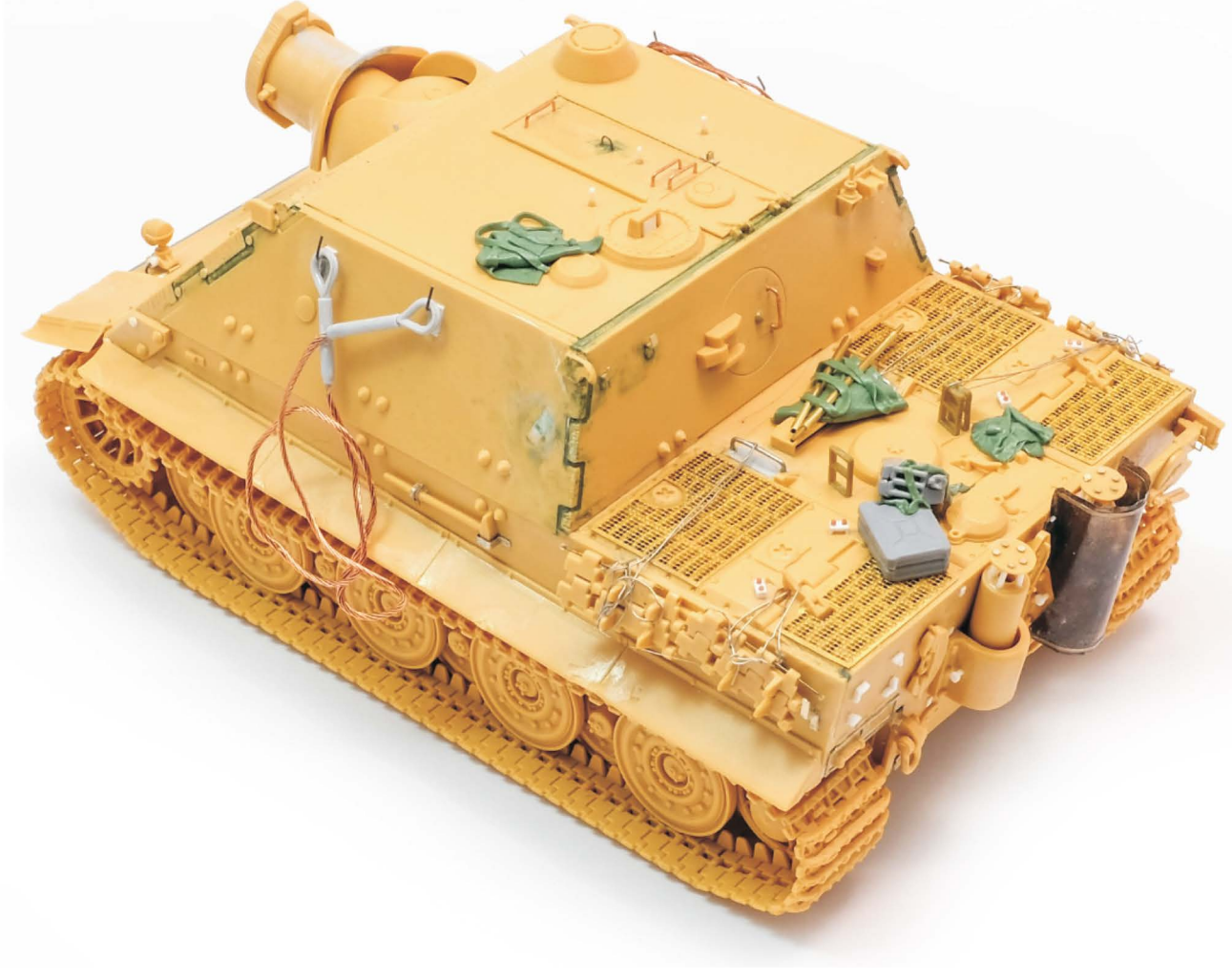
Paul's model is based on the Tamiya 1/48 scale German 38cm Assault Mortar Sturmtiger kit built with the addition of photo-etched brass details from Hauler, shown at top right, a Czech company whose products are also mentioned on page 48. Below: The assembled model ready for priming. Note the many added details such as the damaged trackguard, missing fender, the cable on the superstructure side and spare track links. Faithfully reproduced here, they can also be seen in the photograph on page 12.



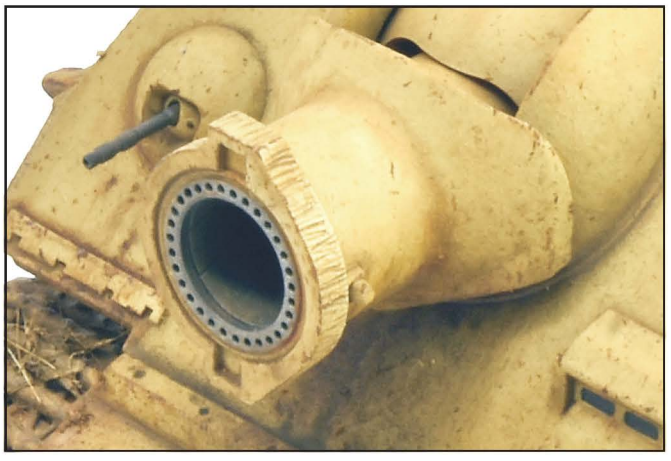
Further views of Paul's completely assembled model. Note the small fittings on the superstructure roof and tools with their photo-etched clasps.

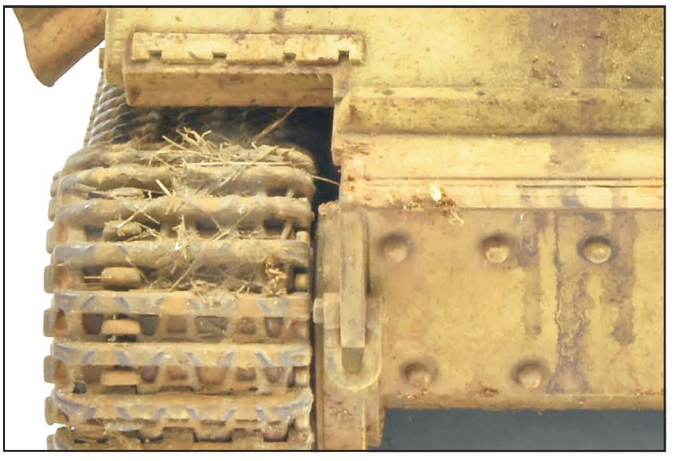


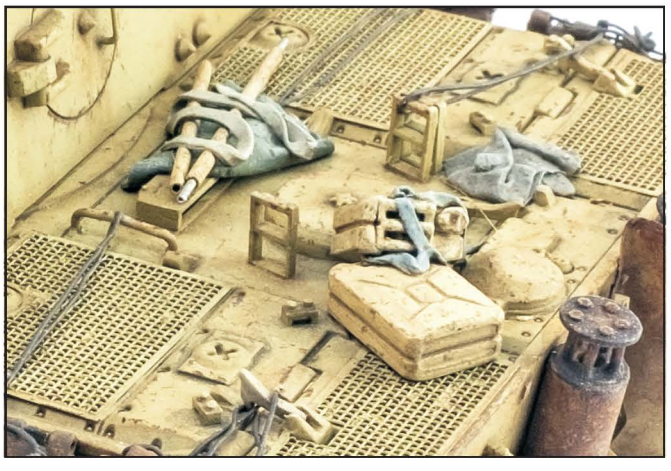
The fully assembled model ready for undercoating with Mr Mahogany Surfacer 1000, a lacquer-based primer which has the effect of smoothing minor imperfections and giving a slightly gritty surface.

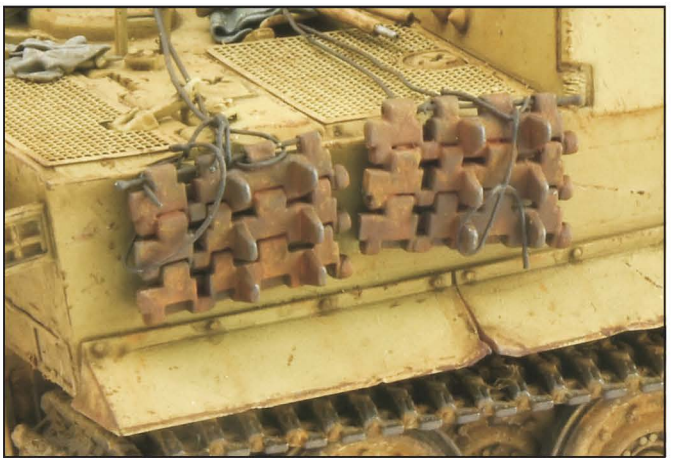


The superstructure and chassis were painted with Tamiya Acrylic Color XF60 and XF 88, both dark yellow shades, thinned with Mr Levelling Color sprayed through an Iwata Eclipse airbrush. The tracks were treated with Vallejo Panzer Aces acrylic track primer and the complete model was then sprayed with Winsor & Newton Galeria Matt Acrylic Varnish to provide a protective coat.

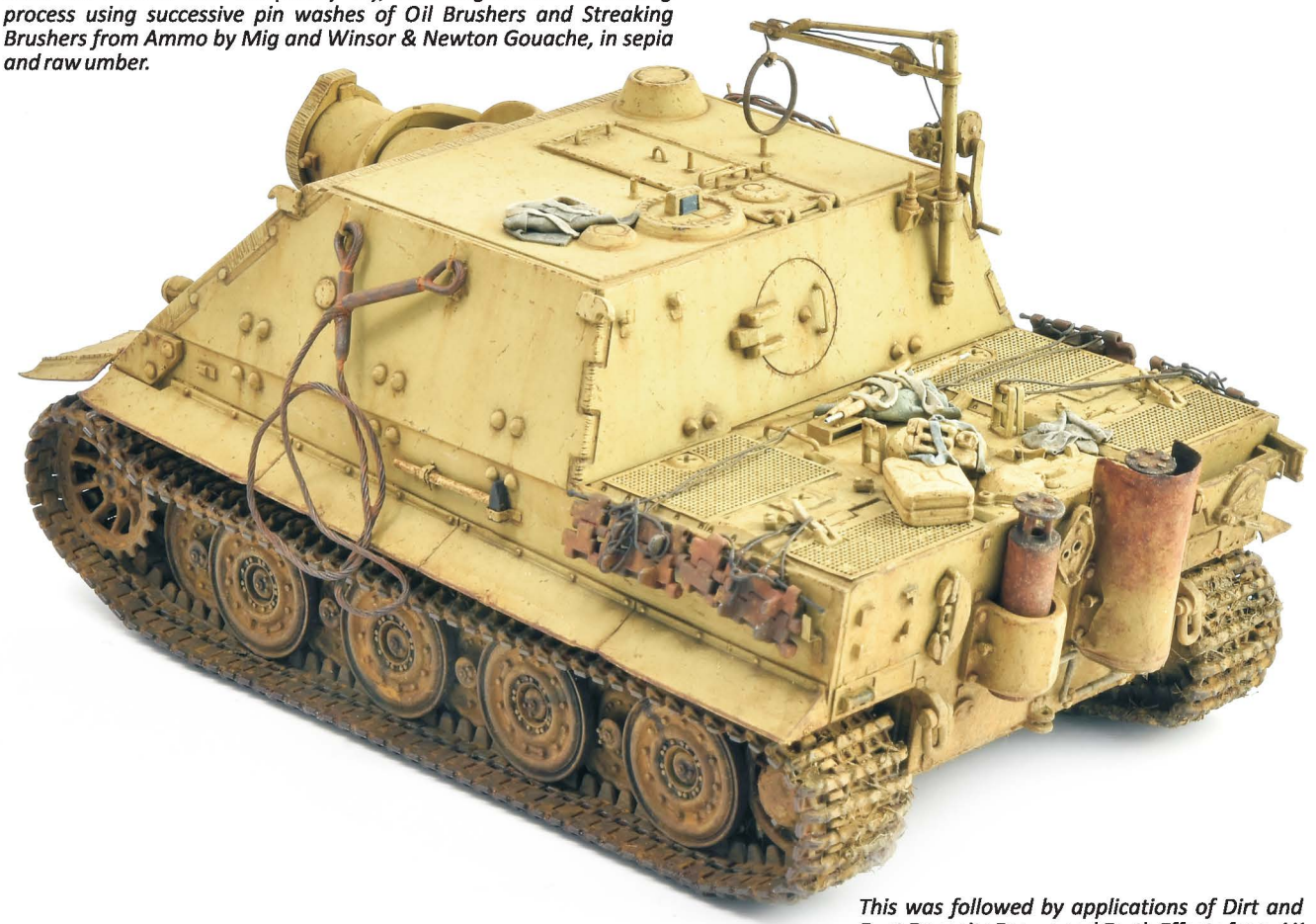








Once the varnish was completely dry, Paul began the weathering process using successive pin washes of Oil Brushers and Streaking Brushers from Ammo by Mig and Winsor & Newton Gouache, in sepia and raw umber.



This was followed by applications of Dirt and Dust Deposits Brown and Earth Effects from AK Interactive. Lastly, fine scratches and chips were added with various shades of Reeves Watercolours, metallic effect products from Ammo by Mig, AK interactive Oilbrushers, Winsor & Newton Gouache and an HB pencil.

PANZER STURM-MÖRSER 38CM 'TIGER'

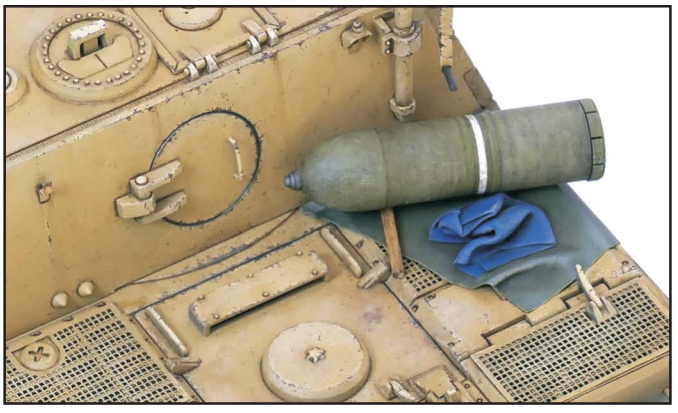
STURMTIGER

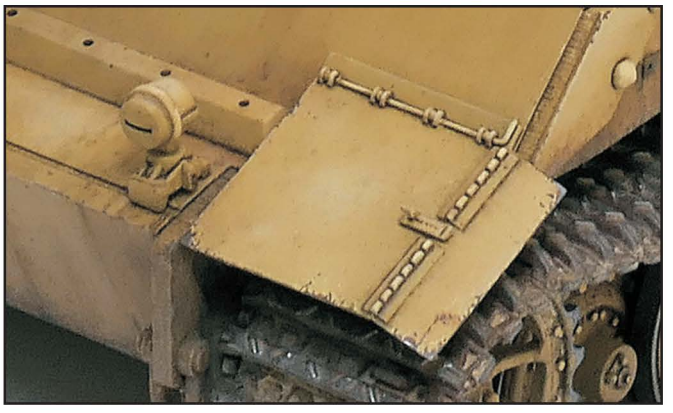
JIŘÍ RUMÍŠEK

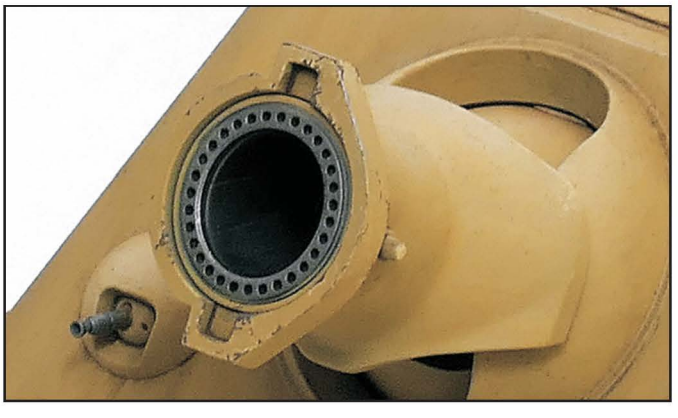
1/48 SCALE

Jiří's model is based on the Tamiya 1/48 scale kit finished with selected parts from the Hauler 1/48 scale photo-etched detail set and the 38cm rocket projectile from RB Model, shown above at right. In addition, there are many minor custom modifications. Rather than use all the available photo-etched parts Jiří preferred to heavily thin the original plastic parts from the kit, such as the exhaust cover or the fenders.

The ammunition crane fitted to the rear of the superstructure was also extensively reworked with a number of small details added. The tarpaulins beneath the 38cm rocket projectile were made from Magic Sculpt Putty and worked into realistic folds. The rocket projectile from RB Model, shown below and made from from turned aluminum and brass, was added before the putty was completely dried.







The finished model was painted in a base coat of Tamiya Acrylic Color XF-60 Dark Yellow using an airbrush, adding small amounts of white to successive coats to create area of subtle shade and highlight over the entire surface. Chipping and details were painted with a very fine, high-quality brush using Vallejo Model Color paints and then artist's oil paints and various AK Interactive products were applied to achieve a weathered effect.

The running gear and tracks were treated with a number of different pigments mixed with Tamiya X-20A thinner. Lastly, the model was oversprayed, somewhat irregularly to avoid too neat an appearance, with Model Master Matte Varnish.

PANZER STURM-MÖRSER 38CM 'TIGER'

STURMTIGER

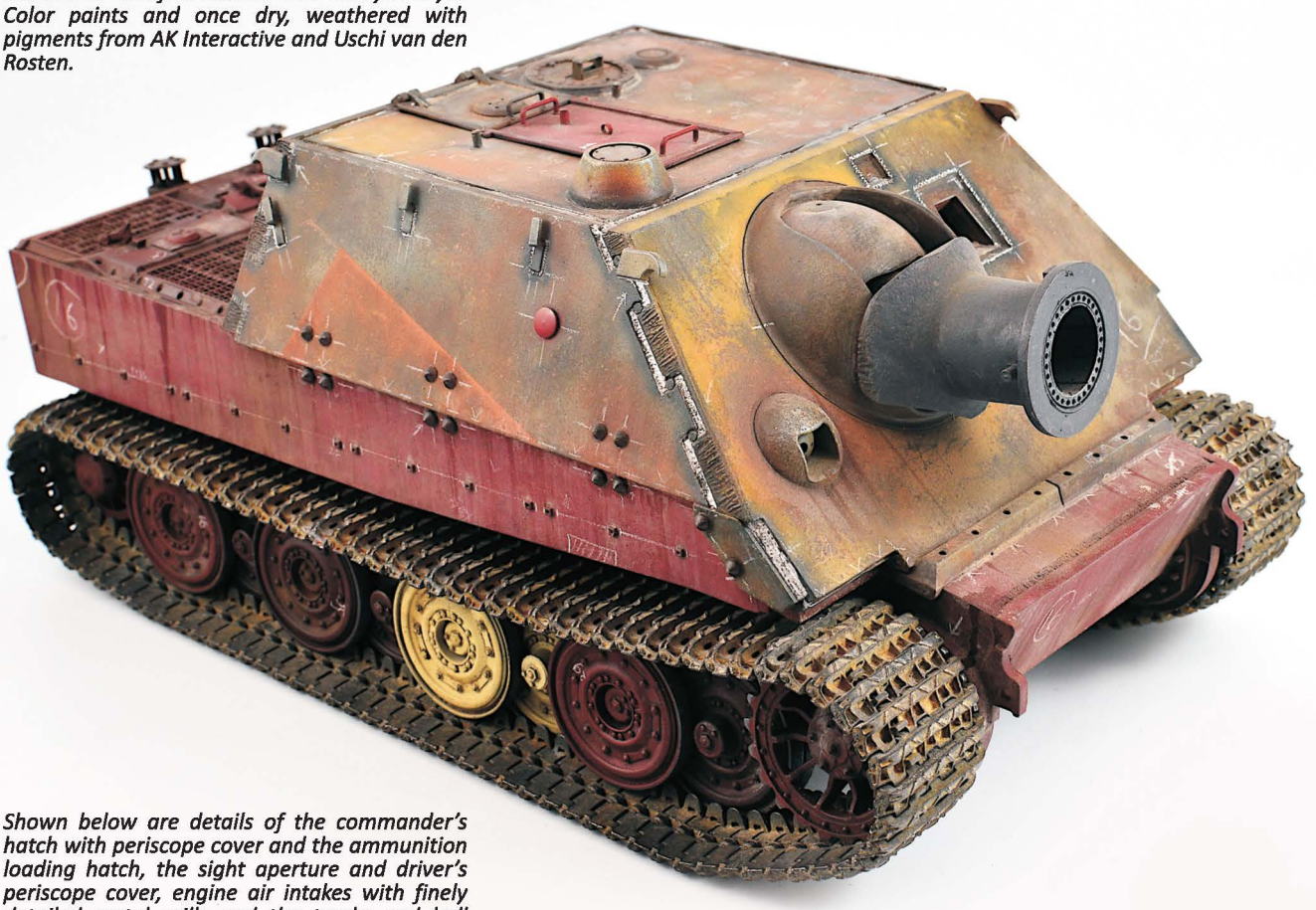
DIMITRIS IOANNIDIS

1/35 SCALE

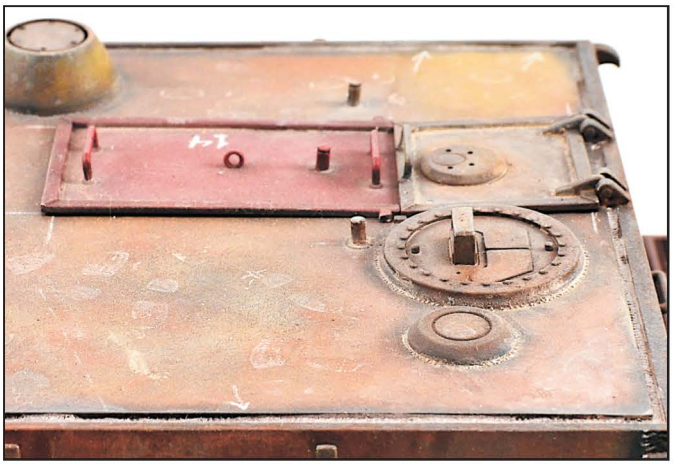
Dimitris' model was fleetingly featured in the very first title in this series - TankCraft 1: Tiger I and Tiger II Tanks, German Army and Waffen-SS, Eastern Front 1944 - and it seems fitting that it should receive fuller exposure in what will be the last volume to examine the Tiger tanks and their variants. Unusually it depicts a Sturmtiger as it makes its way through the factory conversion process.

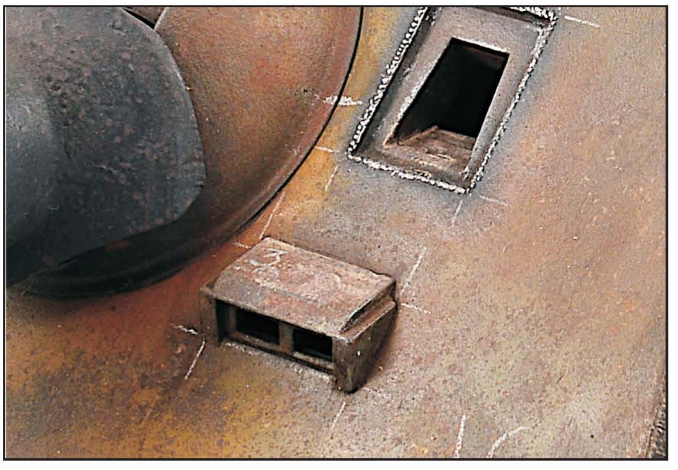
The completed model is based on the AFV Club 1/35 scale Sturmtiger with additional parts from Voyager Model and Friulmodel metal tracks. Dimitris restricted the colour scheme to RAL 3009 Oxidrot red primer although a few road wheels are painted in RAL 7028 Dunkelgelb as these vehicles were all conversions of older Tiger I chassis.

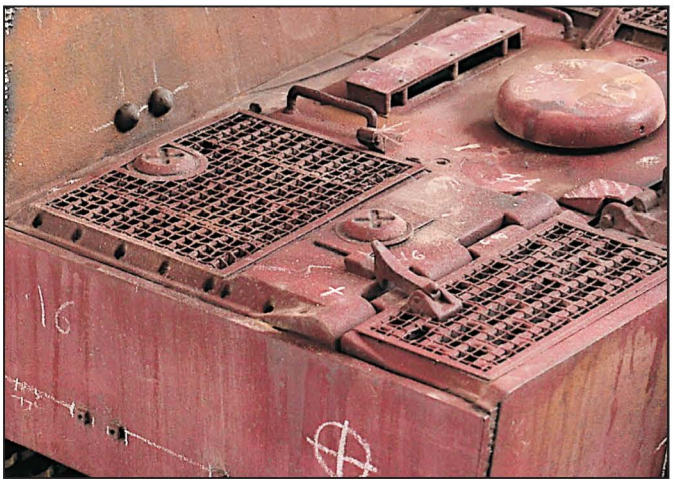
The model was first coated with Tamiya Acrylic Color paints and once dry, weathered with pigments from AK Interactive and Uschi van den Rosten.

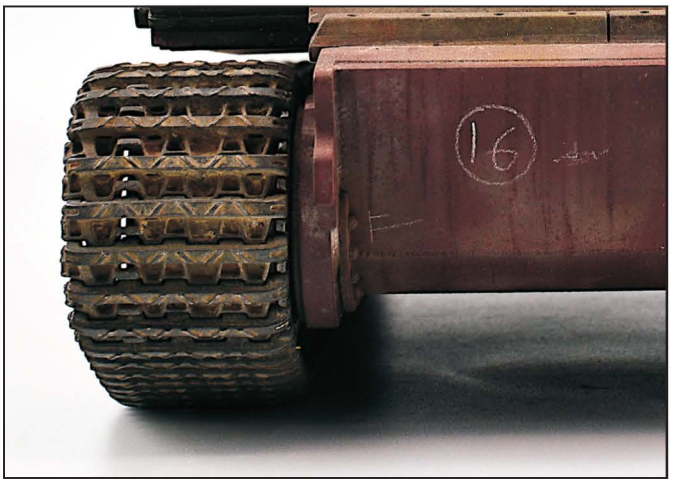


Shown below are details of the commander's hatch with periscope cover and the ammunition loading hatch, the sight aperture and driver's periscope cover, engine air intakes with finely detailed metal grills and the tracks and hull extension.

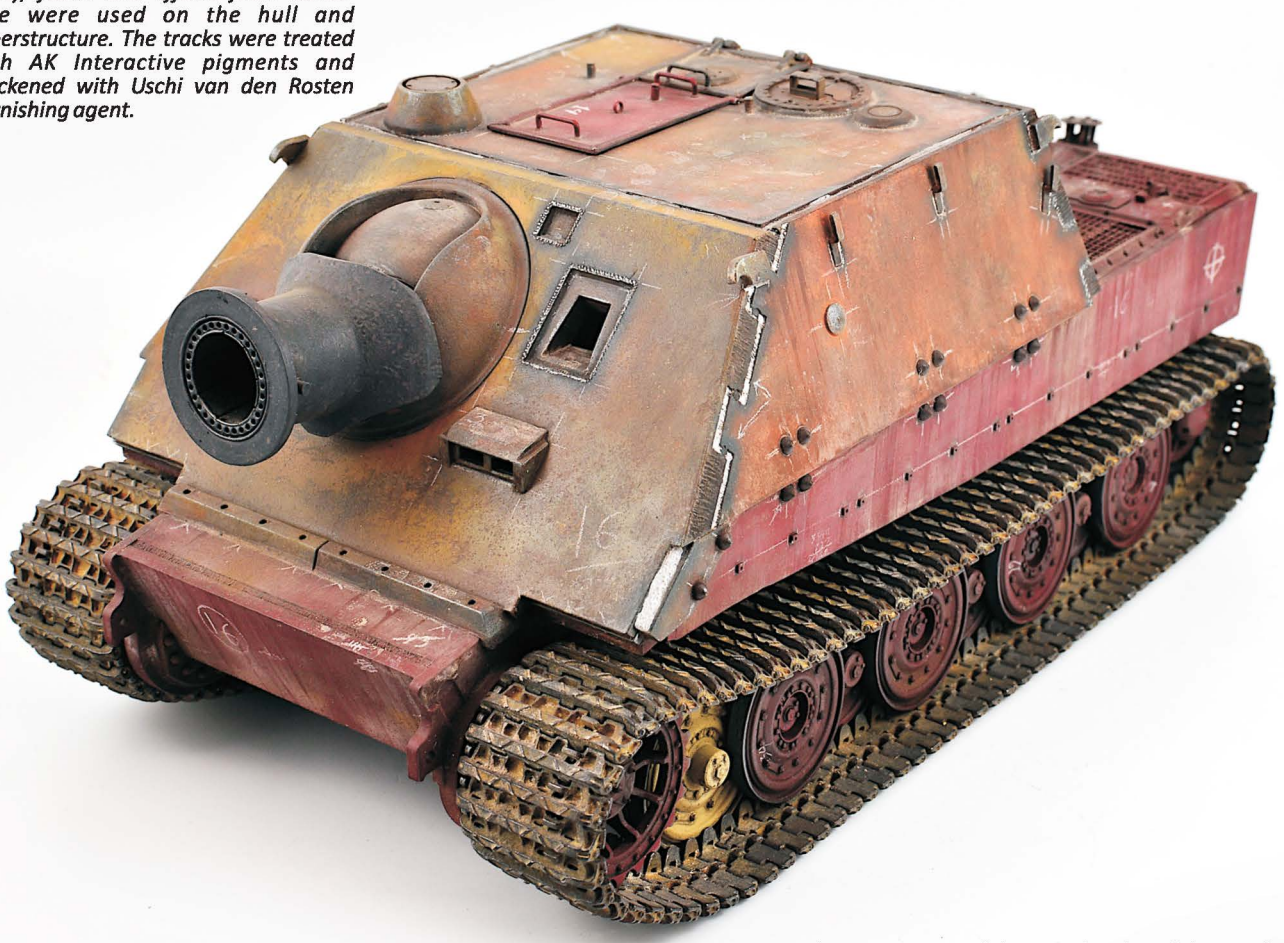








Lastly, filters and effects from Wilder Line were used on the hull and superstructure. The tracks were treated with AK Interactive pigments and blackened with Uschi van den Rosten burnishing agent.



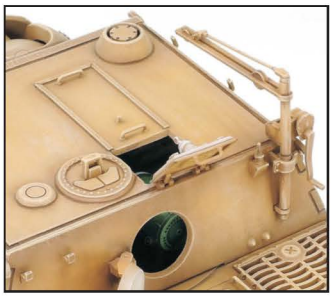
Below: A top view of the completed model. Note the finely applied chalk markings and footprints left by the assembly workers.

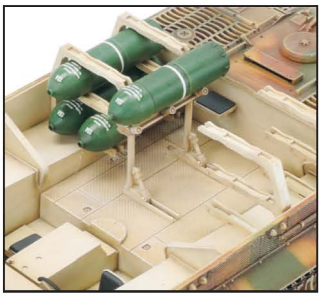
Plastic model kits of the Sturmtiger have been available since at least the 1980s when Tamiya released a 1/35 scale version which was for a number of years the only injection-moulded replica available. But at about the same time a number of smaller concerns, such as NKC Modeles in France and Airmodel in Germany, were pioneering the use of polyurethane resin to produce detailed models of the Sturmtiger. But this medium is quite brittle when compared to injection-moulded plastic and the kits needed a considerable amount of clean-up, requiring the application of a cyanoacrylate-based glue to join the parts. In short, they were not for the novice. But they did contribute to the concept of multi-media kits which are now commonplace. Replicas of the Sturmtiger are today produced in a number of scales ranging from huge radio-controlled 1/16 scale versions to tiny 6mm wargames miniatures from companies such as GHQ Models. But these are at the extreme ends of the market and I have chosen to concentrate here, as in previous books, on the most popular modelling scales of 1/35, 1/48 and 1/72. The list presented here is of course far from exhaustive, mostly due to reasons of space, and I have chosen to concentrate, as in previous books, on the most readily available offerings. I could not hope to list all the producers of aftermarket accessories, which far outnumbered the kit manufacturers, and I have purposely not included the many who offer generic update sets for the Tiger I chassis as these have been mentioned in other books in this series. Companies and products are listed here in no particular order of preference and I have only commented on features of which I have personal experience. I would urge readers to undertake their own research beginning with the index of manufacturers and their contact details can be found on page 64.

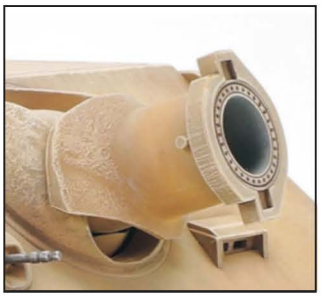
TAMIYA INCORPORATED

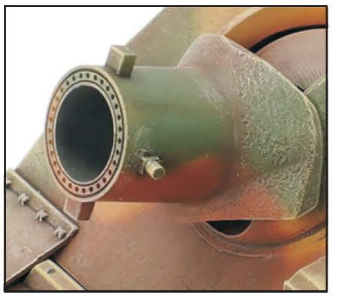
This Japanese company is currently the largest producer of scale model kits in the world, having begun life as a sawmill and timber supply firm. In 1959, after some success with wooden models, the company switched to injection-moulded plastic and by the early 1970s Tamiya was producing a large range of armoured vehicles, with complementary figures and accessories, and was almost solely responsible for the rise in popularity of 1/35 scale. Although rather basic by today's standards, these kits were highly accurate and detailed when compared to other models on the market at the time. Importantly, they were all made to the same scale, encouraging modellers to build a collection, and affordable. The company's near monopoly of the 1/35 scale market remained unchallenged until the release of the first Dragon Models kits in 1987.

Above: Tamiya's 1/48 scale Sturmtiger. The company's kits have long been known for the realistic, and often dramatic, artwork for the box. At right and below: The 1/35 scale Sturmtiger built and painted for the company's catalogue.









Tamiya's first 1/35 scale version of the Sturmtiger was released in the late 1980s and reworked in 1994. It is still available today, largely unchanged. Although the kit is showing its age it is reasonably accurate, offering individual track links and some interior parts, and competitively priced. Commendably, the instructions do point out the need for Zimmerit and where it should be applied. In 2017 the company released a 1/48 scale version which features very crisp detail, optional parts and photo-etched engine grills. The tracks are single-length vinyl versions but are exceptionally detailed.

DRAGON MODELS

Based in Hong Kong, Dragon Models has been one of the most influential producers of armoured scale models since the company was launched in the 1980s. In 2003 the company released a 1/72 scale version of the Sturmtiger which, rather curiously, features a die-cast metal upper hull and an injection-moulded plastic lower portion. Shown here is the 1/72 scale model built by the author with many added details. The company also offers a number of pre-built and painted Sturmtiger replicas, also in 1/72 scale, and a tiny 1/144 scale kit.

TRUMPETER/HOBBY BOSS

Often thought to be separate entities, these Chinese companies are in fact owned by the same corporation, are located at the same address and are essentially the same firm although different models are marketed separately under the two labels. Trumpeter offers two 1/72 scale Sturmtiger models marketed as late and early versions.

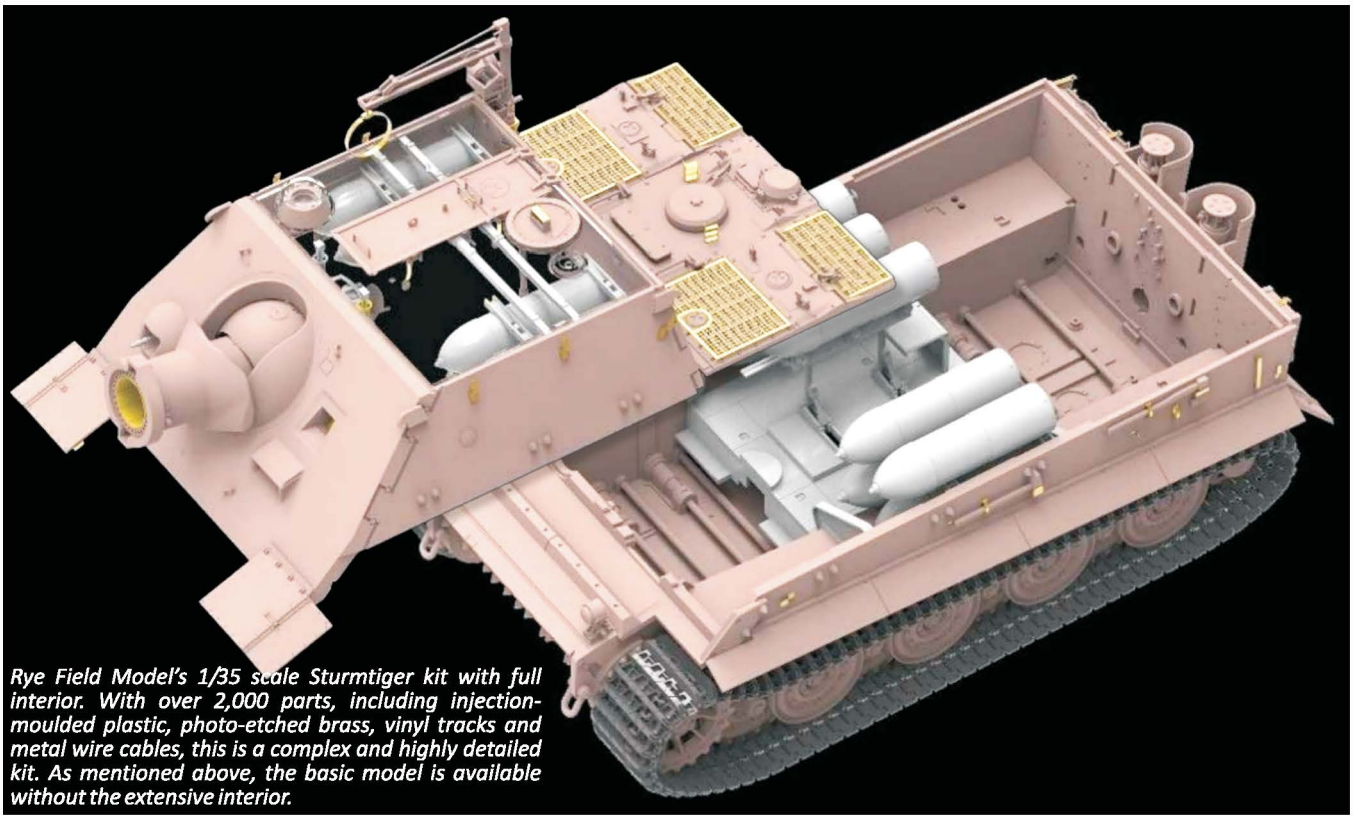
At left: The Trumpeter 1/72 scale Sturmtiger model completed with the resin accessory set from Black Dog. Above: The same kit built and painted in what I can only describe as an unsympathetic style.

3D PRINTED MODELS

With the growing availability of 3D printers, a number of companies now offer models of the Sturmtiger, mostly in the smaller scales. Although this is an interesting development, most of the models that I have been able to view are simplistic, inaccurate and comparatively expensive. I will mention just two here: EMP3d from Poland (1) and Mironius Models from Greece (2).

RYE FIELD MODEL

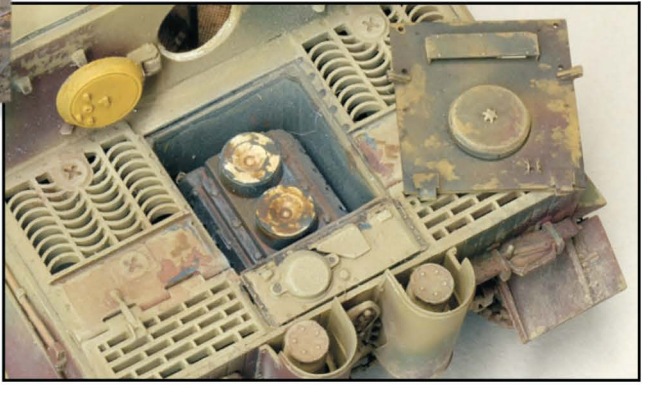
Based in Hong Kong, this company launched a series of armour models, three highly accurate and detailed kits depicting Tiger I variants, within the short space of six months from late 2015. The company released a 1/35 scale Sturmtiger model with complete interior details in 2018 and followed this in 2019 with a kit without the interior parts, which is of course much less expensive. In just a few years of operation this company has gained a reputation for accuracy and a high degree of detail. Both kits, externally at least, appear to be based on the Sturmtiger captured by units of the US Army at Oberembt in February 1945.



Rye Field Model's 1/35 scale Sturmtiger kit with full interior. With over 2,000 parts, including injection-moulded plastic, photo-etched brass, vinyl tracks and metal wire cables, this is a complex and highly detailed kit. As mentioned above, the basic model is available without the extensive interior.

ITALERI

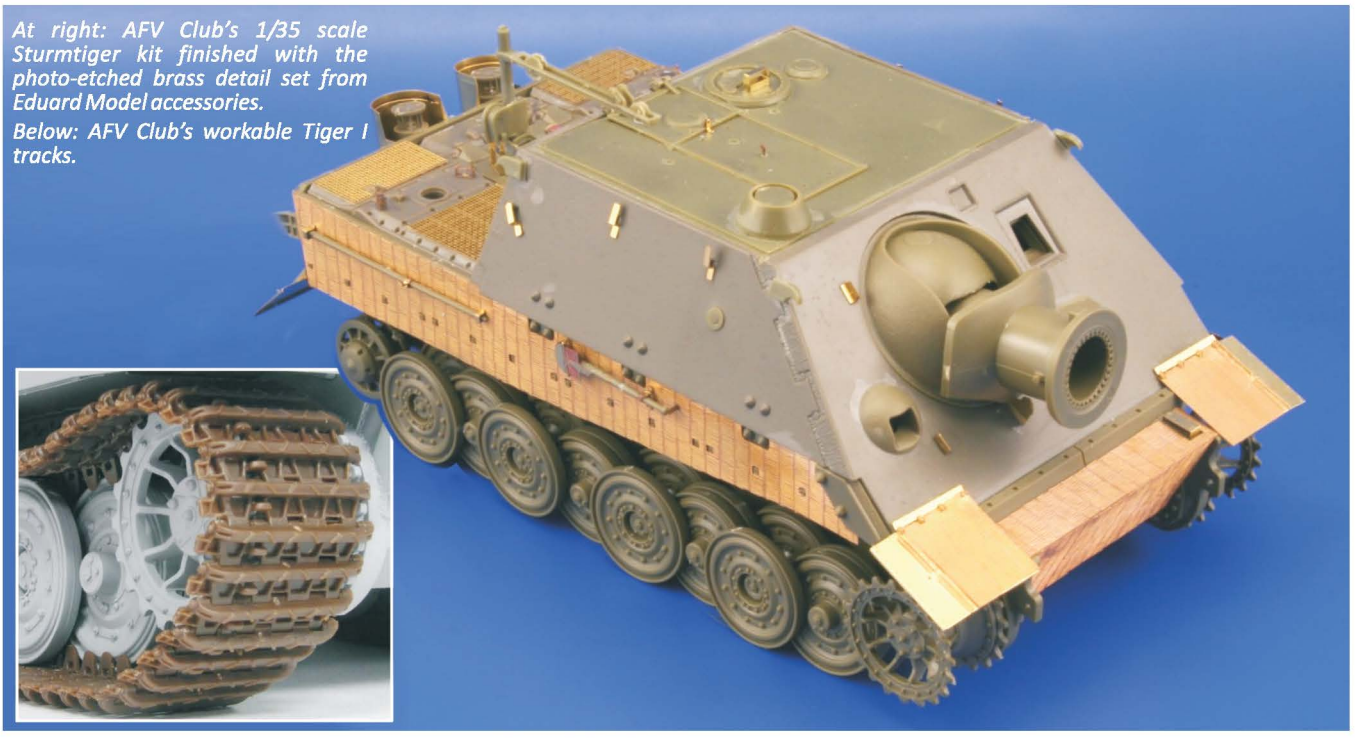
This Italian company has been producing plastic models since its foundation in 1962 and the current catalogue contains a 1/35 scale Sturmtiger which was originally released in 1997 and updated with new parts in 2019. The basic Italeri Sturmtiger has also been re-branded by several other companies including Revell, Testors and Zvezda but it appears that these were not the updated 2019 version.



Above: The current packaging of the Italeri 1/35 scale Sturmtiger No 6573 with artwork representing one of the vehicles of Sturm-Mörser-Batterie 1002. Although based on the original kit released in 1997, this model does contain some new parts including a single-length vinyl track. But it does seem that some of the older options are included. At right: Details of the interior of Italeri's 1/35 scale Sturmtiger No 299 with interior details. This model is marked as discontinued in the company's catalogue but is still available at a number of retailers.

AFV CLUB

First released in 2006, this model is based on the company's 1/35 scale Tiger I and includes a number of parts, notably the Zimmerit applicator tool, that were offered in that kit. Small details are provided in photo-etched brass and the tracks are single-length vinyl models. The 1/48 kit is also based on an earlier Tiger I model and is basically a scaled-down version of the 1/35 scale offering. AFV Club also produce an interior details set and 38cm ammunition for the 1/35 scale Sturmtiger. This model has also been released under the World of Models logo.



At right: AFV Club's 1/35 scale Sturmtiger kit finished with the photo-etched brass detail set from Eduard Model accessories.
Below: AFV Club's workable Tiger I tracks.

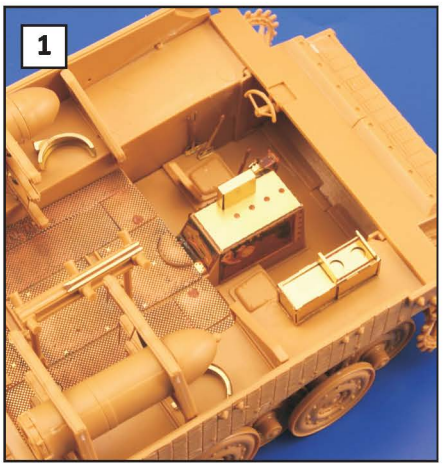
MATO TANKS

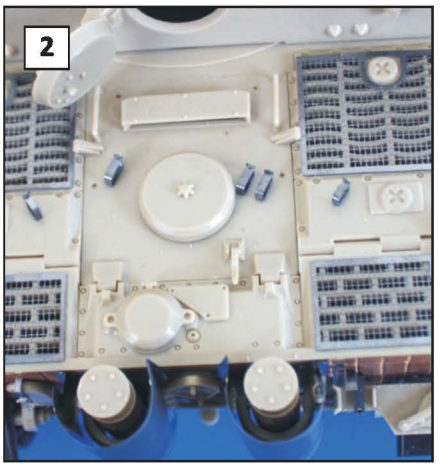
This Canadian company produces a range of 1/16 scale remotely-controlled model armoured vehicles including a Sturmtiger which appears to be based on the example currently on display at Kubinka. The lower hull, rear sections and wheels, and of course the motor and gear box, are all produced in metal giving the completed model a total weight of over 5 kilograms. Options such as sound simulation and flashing lights should not detract from the fact that this is quite an accurate representation. Although expensive, at around USD500, it is almost half the cost of the Torro 1/16 scale Sturmtiger.

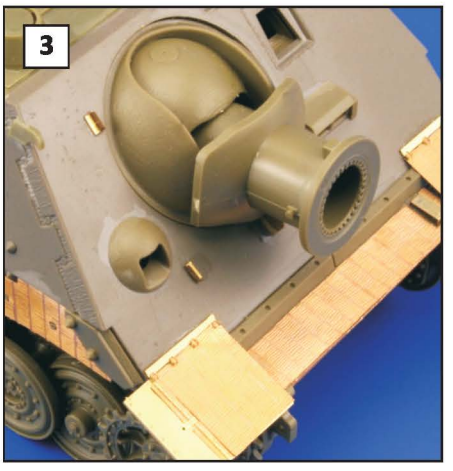
Mato's 1/16 scale Sturmtiger complete with carrying case and remote control. Despite the accuracy of the kit's constituent parts the barrel counterweight has been incorrectly assembled for this promotional shot.

EDUARD MODEL ACCESSORIES

This Polish company has been manufacturing high-quality accessories in photo-etched brass and resin for many years and was one of the earliest firms to offer upgrade sets in the smaller scales. In addition to the upgrade sets Eduard offers other accessories including scale rifles and machine guns, ammunition crates, paint masks and markings. Shown below are photo-etched brass detail sets for 1/35 scale Sturmtiger kits from, 1. Revell, 2. Tamiya and 3. AFV Club.

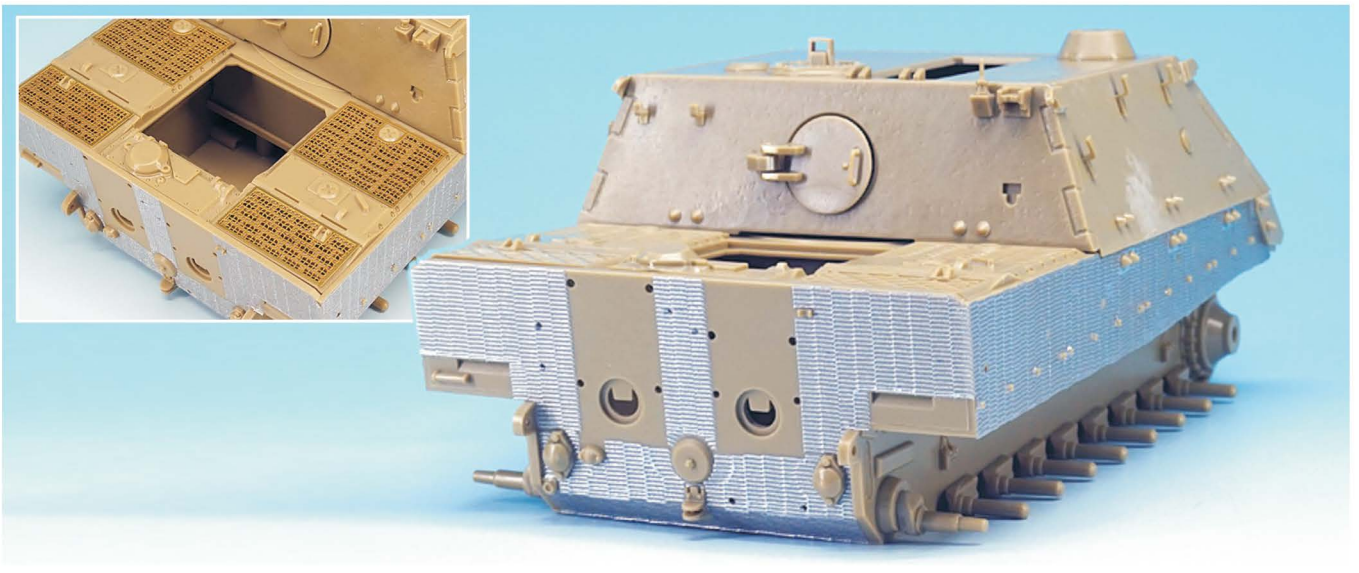






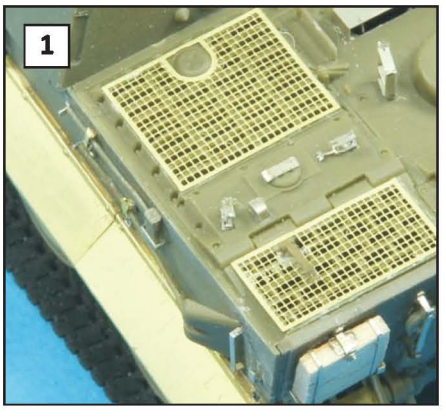
DEF.MODEL

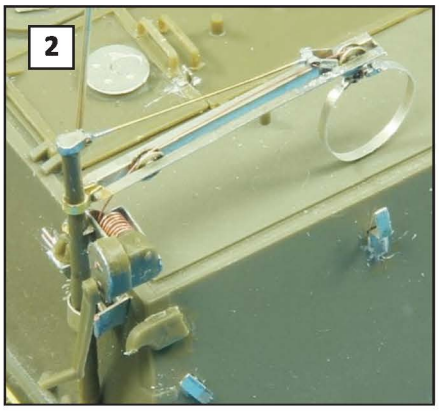
Based in South Korea, this company produces a range of detail sets for the Sturmtiger, principally photo-etched brass engine grills and Zimmerit texture which the company refers to as a decal, as shown below. The latter is effectively a water-slide transfer which can also be worked into shape with Tamiya adhesive.

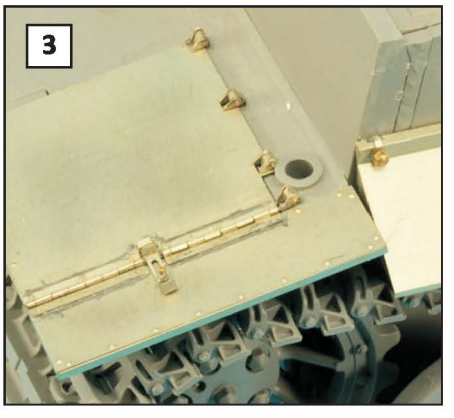


ABER

This Polish company has been manufacturing and selling upgrade sets since 1995, working in photo-etched brass, milled aluminium and brass, stainless steel and even wood. For some time now Tamiya has included Aber products with a number of their models. In 1/35 scale Aber currently offers an extensive exterior detail set for the Sturmtiger, an interior set specifically for the Tamiya kit and exhaust covers and fenders, all in photo-etched brass. Shown below are 1. and 2. Parts from the 1/48 scale detail set. 3. A front fender in 1/16 scale. Note that the latter is marketed for the Tiger I.

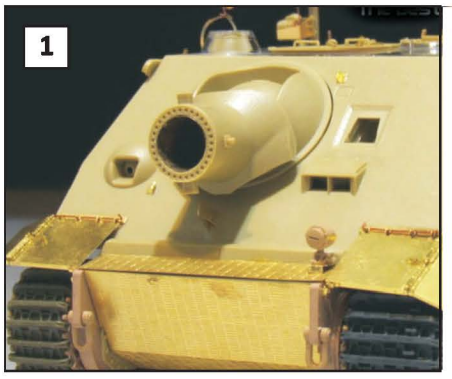


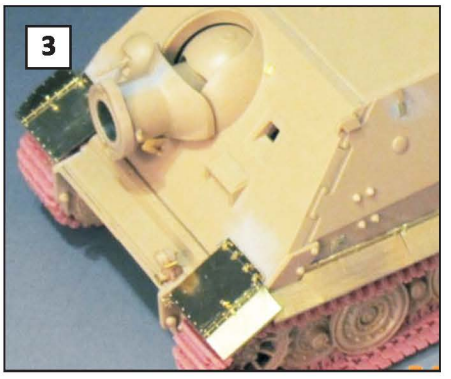




VOYAGER MODEL

Voyager have been manufacturing comprehensive upgrade sets for scale models since 2003 with the release of their first set for 1/35 scale armour. The company produces photo-etched detail sets in 1/35 and 1/48 scale made specifically for the Rye Field Model (1), AFV Club (2) and Tamiya (3) models

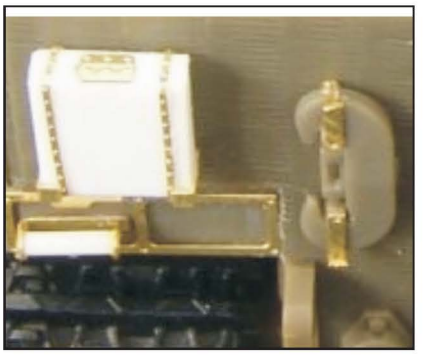




HAULER

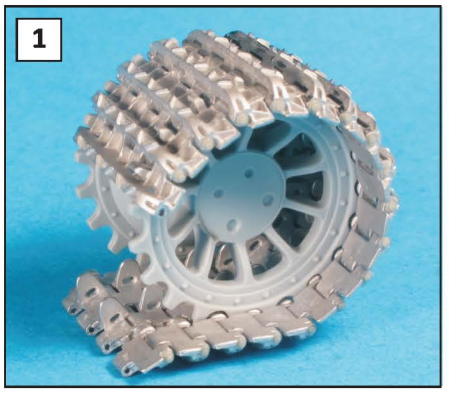
This Czech company has been operating since 2008 and is in fact a continuation of the defunct Extratech Ltd. The current catalogue features detail sets marketed as designed for the 1/48 scale AFV Club model although they would be perfectly suitable for use with the Tamiya kit. There is also a 1/35 scale rendition of the 38cm Raketen Sprengranate and a complete kit in 1/120 scale.

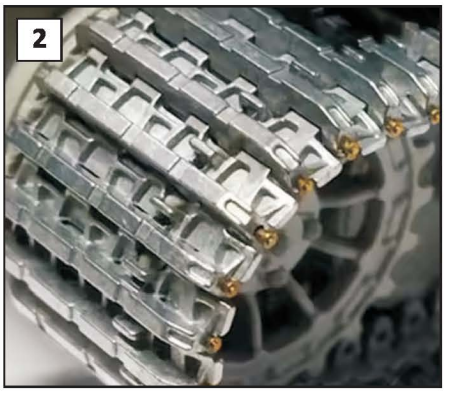
Below and at right: Hauler's photo-etched brass and resin upgrade set used to complete the Tamiya 1/48 scale kit.

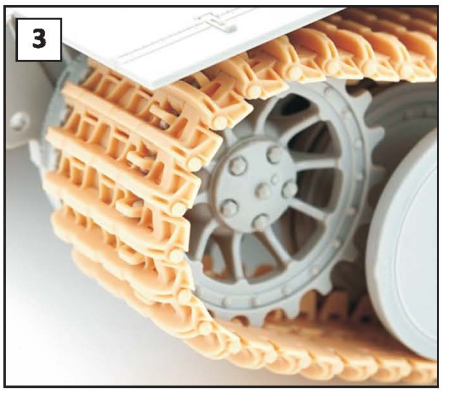


AFTERMARKET TRACKS

Most plastic kits today contain realistic tracks made from a form of vinyl which, unlike the older types, can be glued together, or hard plastic individual links. Nevertheless, there are many modellers who wish for the highest level of detail and realism possible and consequently the number of quality aftermarket products available seems to have increased in recent years. Motorised models require workable tracks made up from individual links held together by pins, as were the full-size items. The examples shown here, all in 1/35 scale, are 1. Later Tiger I tracks in white metal from Master Club. 2. Early Tiger I tracks in metal from Kaizen. 3. Workable individual Tiger I track links in resin from Trex.







As mentioned in the introduction to this book, the prototype Sturmtiger was assembled between August and October 1943 and was based on the suspension and hull of a Tiger I. On 20 October 1943, at the Arys training grounds in East Prussia, it was presented to Hitler who gave his immediate approval, ordering that series production begin as soon as possible. Initially a series production figure of ten vehicles per month was considered but this was later revised and it was expected that the first three Sturmtigers would be completed by 20 February 1944. The managers at Friedrich Krupp AG had already been advised that a number of Tiger I hulls would be required and the armoured superstructures were to be manufactured by Brandenburg Eisenwerke at the company's Kirchmöser plant. The vehicle's main weapon, the 38cm RW 61 rocket launcher, was produced by Rheinmetall-Borsig and final assembly would take place at the Berlin factories of Altmärkische Kettenfabrik (Alkett). But, as explained here and elsewhere in this book, very little would go according to plan. It should be noted, before beginning this section, that our knowledge of the production history of the Sturmtiger is, to a large extent, limited to correspondence between the Armaments Ministry and the Inspekteur der Panzertruppen, and later the Inspekteur der Artillerie, and the records of Hitler's regular conferences. Just two official documents that are specifically related to the production and availability of these vehicles have survived the war, one dated 1 November 1944 and the other describing the situation as at 1 December. Later developments regarding numbers of vehicles on hand with specific units are based on information taken from unit strength reports and operational evaluations. Some of these are referred to earlier in this book.

Production numbers and Allocations

By the end of March 1944, despite Hitler's interest in the progamme, not a single Sturmtiger had left the assembly lines. On 19 April, the day before his fifty-fifth birthday, the Führer ordered that series production was to commence without delay, countering the argument that new hulls could not be spared by stipulating that only the chassis of tanks returned to Germany for long-term repair would be used. This is the first mention of the use of recycled hulls and there is no reason to believe that the prototype was not based on a new chassis. The production schedule proposed in late 1943 of ten vehicles per month was briefly revived but very quickly amended to twelve in total.

But only the prototype, still fitted with its mild steel superstructure at that point, and two completed conversions were available by August 1944 and if not for the fighting in Warsaw, in which these vehicles participated, the Sturmtiger project may have ended there. The devastating performance of the 38cm weapon was again brought to Hitler's attention and in late August 1944 he was promised that another seven vehicles would be assembled between Friday, 15 September and the following Thursday, that is, one vehicle every day (1). It was probably at this time that the order to upgrade the prototype was given, a process that was expected to take three

Notes

1. Some sources suggest that these dates were stipulated at the April conference but the timeframe mentioned here is almost certainly correct.

The prototype Sturmtiger photographed in October 1943 at Arys in East Prussia. Note the shape of the gun mantlet with its very obvious straight lower edge. Note also the Kugelblende MG 34 mount, the driver's periscope cover and additional hull front armour with distinctive conical-shaped bolt covers. The notation on the superstructure glacis, just visible behind the Bosch headlight, refers to the armour thickness and the angle of the plate. *See also page 55.*

days. Exactly when the rebuild took place is unclear as the vehicle was with Pz.Ers.Abt 500 at Paderborn in October 1944 and was still there in December.

Surpassing expectations, Alkett was able to complete ten Sturmtigers in September as shown in the HWA report dated 1 November 1944. The report makes it quite clear that three Sturmtigers had been accepted by the HWA for service by the previous August in addition to the ten taken on in September. The latter are referred to as Neufertig, or newly finished. Unhelpfully, the remainder of the report seems to ignore the vehicles assembled in August, giving the total number available as ten. None are recorded as being in repair but just eight were ready for allocation with two held by Inspectorate 6 (In 6), the office of the HWA responsible for the design and inspection of armoured vehicles.

The vehicles with In 6 were probably those mentioned as assigned to 'H.Z.A. Senne' in the October allocation list. That document, compiled at about the same time as the HWA report referred to above, shows the following:

Verband *(Unit)*	Stück *(Items)*	Zugeweisen *(Assigned)*		Abtransport *(Shipped)*		Zug Nr.	Eintr bei Tr.	Verfg Nr.	Bemerkungen *(Remarks)*
		Stück *(Items)*	Am *(Date)*	Geplant *(Planned)*	Tatfächlich *(Confirmed)*				
Pz.Ers.Abt.500	2	1			?				Gusseisen
		1			12.10				251 174
Fa.Borsig	1	1			13.10				250 237
Stu.Mörs.Kp. 1001	4	4			11.10				250 471
									250 051
									250 103
									250 043
Stu.Mörs.Kp. 1000	4	1			?				Raum Warschau von Budapest
		1			?				
		2	26.10						
H.Z.A. Senne 2 Stck.									
Ingesamt bisher 13 Stück ausgeliefert									

Above: A reconstruction of the original Zuführungslist, or allocation list, for the month of October 1944 compiled by the Heereszeugamt (HZA). The translations are mine and have in some cases been simplified for English readers. The columns marked Zug Nr., Eintr bei Tr. and Verfg Nr. refer to railway consignment and shipping details and were not recorded, which was not uncommon. The inclusion of vehicle chassis numbers is rare but does occur and is most helpful in this case. The abbreviation Pz.Ers.Abt.500 identifies Panzer-Ersatz-Abteilung 500, a training unit based at Paderborn in Germany. Note that the prototype is included and is referred to as Gusseisen, literally cast iron. Fa.Borsig indicates the Rheinmetall-Borsig plant which produced the RW 61 rocket launcher and the H.Z.A. Senne notation shows that two vehicles were not yet assigned to an operational unit and were being held at the Sennelager training grounds. The final comment, Ingesamt bisher 13 Stück ausgeliefert, confirms that thirteen vehicles had so far been delivered.

When comparing the October allocation list and November HWA production report it seems obvious that the three August vehicles are of course the prototype, referred to as Gusseisen, held at Paderborn with Pz-Ers-Abt 500 and the two vehicles of Stu.Mörs.Kp.1000 described as being somewhere between Warsaw and Budapest. Interestingly, the latter entry confirms that the loss of one of these vehicles in Hungary, mentioned in many accounts, is incorrect.

The Sturmtigers assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp 1001 were all September-built models as were the two vehicles in transit to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1000, the two Sturmtigers at Sennelager, Fgst Nr.250237 held at the Rheinmettal factory and Fgst Nr.251174 with Pz-Ers-Abt 500. The latter was probably one of the few Sturmtigers built on a post-January 1944 Tiger I hull featuring the distinctive notched side extensions.

As if to confirm that the Sturmtiger was still very much an experimental system, correspondence between the Armaments Ministry and the Insp.d.Pz.Tr shows that at the time the November report was being prepared, alternative designs, based on a modified Pzkpfw IV and Hummel self-propelled gun chassis, were still being considered.

Informed of the successful completion of ten Sturmtigers in September 1944, Hitler expressed his appreciation to those involved, specifically mentioning Obermeister Franz Hahn of Alkett, and ordered that going forward five new vehicles should be built every month. Surviving documents confirm that five

vehicles were completed in December 1944, bringing the total production run to seventeen series vehicles and the single prototype. A Hauptaussschuss Waffen report shows that the last Sturmtigers had been assembled and accepted by 18 December 1944.

The other surviving HWA report, dated 1 December 1944, shows no change from the November list other than to state that one of the In 6 Sturmtigers had been released for service. A rather cryptic, handwritten note which apparently questions the 'Vertigungs-Vorschau', or production preview, section of the December report mentions the self-propelled 21cm Mörser project. Although this is not strictly relevant to our study, I mention it here to show that fanciful, indeed wasteful, designs were still being pursued at this late date.

The allocation list compiled for December is, however, far more illuminating. It shows that the prototype is still with Pz-Ers-Abt 500 and is still referred to as Gusseisen, suggesting that the upgrade to an armour plate superstructure had not yet been completed. But Fgst Nr.251174

Verband *(Unit)*	Stück *(Items)*	Zugeweisen *(Assigned)*		Abtransport *(Shipped)*		Zug Nr.	Eintr bei Tr.	Verfg Nr.	Bemerkungen *(Remarks)*
		Stück *(Items)*	Am *(Date)*	Geplant *(Planned)*	Tatfächlich *(Confirmed)*				
Pz.Ers.Abt.500	1	1			?				Gusseisen
Stu.Mörs.Kp. 1001	4	4			11.10				250 471
									250 051
									250 103
									250 043
Stu.Mörs.Kp. 1000	4	1			?				250 091
		1			?				250 230
		2	26.10		1.12				250 327
									251 168
Stu.Mörs.Kp. 1002	4	2	8.12		11.12				250 237
		2	13.12		13.12				251 174
									v. E.u.A.A. 500
Ingesamt bisher 13 Stück ausgeliefert									

Above: A reconstruction of the original Zuführungslist for the month of December 1944 compiled by the Heereszeugamt (HZA). Note that the new vehicle with Pz.Ers.Abt.500 and the Sturmtiger held at the Rheinmettal factory have both been assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp. 1002. We can assume that the later was being fitted with a new launcher in October. Again, all thirteen vehicles assembled to the end of September are accounted for and if any of the new conversions completed in December were accepted before the allocation list for the month was compiled they are not accounted for here.

and the vehicle at the Rheinmetall plant, Fgst Nr.250237, had been assigned to the recently-formed Stu.Mörs.Kp.1002. That company had also been assigned two Sturmtigers which are described as coming from E.u.A.A. (Ersatz- und Ausbildungs-Abteilung) and these were almost certainly the vehicles held at Sennelager in October. The list shows that the Sturmtigers earmarked for Stu.Mörs.Kp.1000 on 26 October, and eventually shipped on 1 December, were Fgst Nr.250327 and 251168, the latter another later production Tiger I hull. The same entry strongly suggests that the two Sturmtigers that were accepted in August 1944, took part in the fighting in Warsaw and were still on hand in October were Fgst Nr.250091 and 250230.

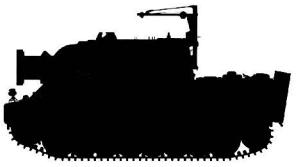
As late as 5 January 1945 Hitler reiterated that production of the Sturmtiger was to continue using chassis returned to Germany for repair, but that studies on the possibility of mounting the 38cm weapon on a lighter base were to carry on. Given that just 199 Tiger tanks were available on all fronts just ten days later on 15 January, and that a significant number of those would have been the Tiger II, it is almost certain that the five conversions completed in December 1944 brought production to an end. But although a total of eighteen Sturmtigers were assembled not all can be accounted for as we shall see.

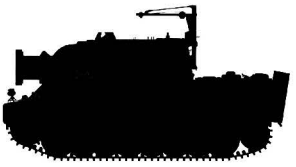
In accordance with the reorganisation of February 1945, two further vehicles were allocated to Stu.Mörs.Batt.1000 but the Sturmtigers and their crews never left Sennelager. It seems certain that Stu.Mörs.Batt.1002 did receive an additional two vehicles as they are mentioned in at least two contemporary documents but Stu.Mörs.Batt.1001 was allocated just four Sturmtigers in total. Intriguingly, this leaves one production vehicle unaccounted for. The individual Sturmtigers that were assigned to the three operational companies are shown in the diagrams on the following two pages.

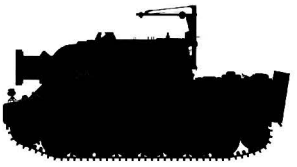
STURM-MÖRSER STURMTIGER, 1943-1945

Despite early expectations that over 100 Sturmtigers would eventually be assembled, just eighteen vehicles, including the prototype, were completed. Only three platoon-sized companies were activated and the vehicles assigned to those units are listed here. The Fahgestellnummern, or chassis numbers, abbreviated here to Fgst Nr., of course refer to the Tiger I hull and suspension that the Sturmtiger conversion was based on. Only ten of these are recorded in official documents and some, as mentioned here, are the subject of debate.

STURM-MÖRSER-KOMPANIE 1000


Fgst Nr.250091


Fgst Nr.250230


Fgst Nr.250327

Fgst Nr.251168

Fgst Nr.250091. Built in July or August 1944 and based on a Tiger I chassis originally assembled in January 1943. Operated in Warsaw under the command of 9.Armee while Stu.Mörs.Kp.1000 was being formed in Germany. Almost certainly one of the vehicles mentioned in the October 1944 allocation list as 'Raum Warsau von Budapest'. Recorded as assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1000 in the December list but the shipment date is noted as a question mark. Reported as being with the company at the end of December 1944 but may have been transferred to Inspektorat 6 of the Heersewaffenamt at about that time which would explain why the company reported that only three serviceable vehicles were on hand in January 1945.

Fgst Nr.250230. Built in July or August 1944 and based on the chassis of an April 1943 Tiger I which was originally allocated to SS-Panzer-Regiment 3 in the following month. With Fgst Nr.250091 this Sturmtiger took part in the fighting in Warsaw under the command of 9.Armee while Stu.Mörs.Kp.1000 was being formed in Germany and was one of the vehicles mentioned in the October 1944 allocation list as 'Raum Warsau von Budapest'. Recorded as assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1000 in the December list but, like Fgst N.250091, the shipment date is noted as a question mark. Reported as being with the company at the end of December 1944 but may have been transferred to Inspektorat 6 of the Heersewaffenamt at about that time.

Fgst Nr.250327. Built in September 1944 and based on a Tiger I chassis originally assembled in May 1943, this vehicle was assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1000 on 26 October 1944 but not shipped until 1 December. Still with the company at the end of the month, it was abandoned at Oberembt, about 25 kilometres west of Cologne, in March 1945. Due to the similarity of the numbers this vehicle is sometimes confused with Fgst Nr.250237.

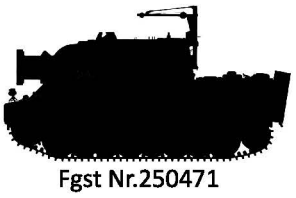
Fgst Nr.251168. Built in September 1944 and based on the chassis of a Tiger I assembled in May 1944. This would have been the first Sturmtiger based on a hull with the notched front extensions that were a feature of Tiger I production from January 1944. Assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1000 probably on 26 October but not shipped until 1 December 1944. Recorded as still with the company at the end of the month.

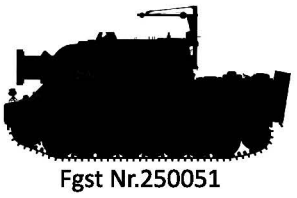
Fgst Nr.Unknown 1

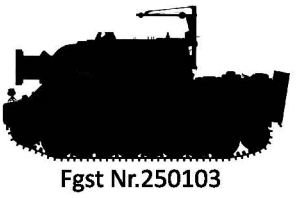
Fgst Nr.Unknown 2

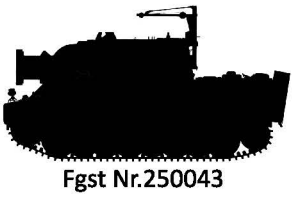
Fgst Nr.Unknown 1 and 2. On 23 January 1945 OKH ordered that, with immediate effect, Sturm-Mörser-Kompanien 1000, 1001 and 1002 were to be renamed Sturm-Mörser-Batterien (RW 61) 1000, 1001 and 1002 and would henceforth come under the control of the Artillery Inspectorate. Further, the commander of the Ersatz-Heer was to arrange the transfer of reserve personnel, instructors and material from Panzer-Ersatz-Abteilung 500 at Paderborn to the Panzer-Haubitzen-Ersatz-und Ausbildung-Abteilung 201 at Gross Born-Lager Westfalenhof. A memo disseminated by Insp.d.Pz.Tr. dated Friday, 23 February 1944 confirming an OKH order of the previous Saturday stated that Stu.Mörs.Batt.1000 was to be increased to six guns. Two vehicles that were at that time held at Sennelager were to be taken over by seven NCOs and four men from the Sturm-Artillerie-Schule at Burg. As the Sturmtigers manufactured in August and September 1944 are all accounted for, these vehicles must have been two of the December production run.

STURM-MÖRSER-KOMPANIE 1001


Fgst Nr.250471


Fgst Nr.250051


Fgst Nr.250103


Fgst Nr.250043

Fgst Nr.250471. Built in September 1944 and based on a Tiger I chassis built in September 1943, this vehicle was assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1001 on 11 October 1944 and still with the company at the end of December 1944.

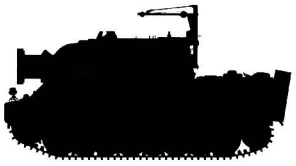
Fgst Nr.250051. Built in September 1944 and based on a Tiger I originally assembled in December 1942. Assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1001 on 11 October 1944 and still with the company at the end of December 1944.

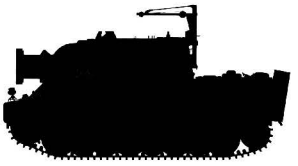
Fgst Nr.250103. Built in September 1944 and based on a January 1943 Tiger I which was initially assigned to SS-Panzer-Regiment 3 in the same month. Allocated to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1001 on 11 October 1944 and still with the company at the end of December 1944.

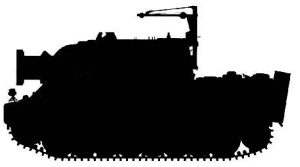
Fgst Nr.250043. Built in September 1944 and based on a Tiger I assembled November 1942, the original tank is said to have been assigned to schwere Panzer-Abteilung 505. Assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1001 on 11 October 1944 and still with the company at the end of December 1944. This vehicle was not, as suggested in some accounts, the prototype.

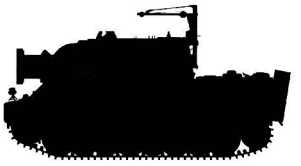
Although the company was renamed and transferred to the Artillery Inspectorate, no further allocation of vehicles appears to have been made and the reported on hand figure for March 1945 was four Sturmtigers.

STURM-MÖRSER-KOMPANIE 1002


Fgst Nr.250237


Fgst Nr.251174


Fgst Nr.Unknown 3


Fgst Nr.Unknown 4

Fgst Nr.250237. Built in September 1944 and based on a Tiger I which was originally assembled in May 1943. Sent to the Rheinmetall-Borsig plant, referred to as 'Fa.Borsig' in the allocation list, on 13 October 1944 and then to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1002 in early December 1944 with Fgst Nr.251174 and two other unidentified vehicles from Sennelager (see below). Still with the company at the end of December 1944. Due to the similarity of the numbers this vehicle is sometimes confused with Fgst Nr.250327.

Fgst Nr.251174. The surviving allocation lists clearly show this Fgst Nr. was shipped to Panzer-Ersatz-Abteilung 500 at Paderborn on 12 October 1944, almost exactly the same time that the Sturmtiger mentioned above was at the Rheinmetall-Borsig plant. Both were subsequently assigned to the recently-formed Stu.Mörs.Kp.1002 on Friday, 8 December and recorded as being shipped on the following Monday. For a considerable period of time nothing was known about these two vehicles but it was generally agreed that a Sturmtiger based on Fgst Nr.250174 was allocated to this company. That number is not mentioned in either of the allocation lists but, as mentioned elsewhere in this book, individual vehicles are not in every case referred to by their chassis number. That the Sturmtiger of this company abandoned near Ebendorf and recovered by units of the US Army is the vehicle on display today at at the Panzer Museum Munster is unquestionably correct but I am unconvinced that it could be based on a chassis originally constructed in May 1944 and the identity of this vehicle is discussed at length on page 60. As can be seen from this chart, two unidentified Sturmtigers were sent to the company from Paderborn in December 1944 and a further two in early 1945 and it would indeed be a strange coincidence if one of those was Fgst Nr.250174.

Fgst Nr.Unknown 3 and 4. A report of October 1944 lists thee vehicles as being on hand with Ersatz und Ausbildungs Abteilung 500, confirming that they were both September-production models. They were shipped to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1002 on 13 December 1944 and were still with the company at the end of that month.

Fgst Nr.Unknown 5

Fgst Nr.Unknown 6

Fgst Nr.Unknown 5 and 6. In February 1945 the company reported that six Sturmtigers were on hand and the additional two must have been received in that month. Again, as all the August and September 1944 production vehicles are accounted for these must have been assembled in December. The total on hand remained the same for March but in April three vehicles were lost at Ebendorf, Calbe and Menden.

UNASSIGNED

Fgst Nr.Unknown 7 (The Prototype)

The prototype vehicle was assembled just prior to October 1943 and was almost certainly based on a new hull and suspension. Using contemporary photographs we can only estimate that the chassis was built between April and August 1943, and the latter date would fit neatly, in the Fgst Nr. range 250220 to 250465. The claim that it was based on Fgst Nr.250043 is certainly incorrect. It was briefly in Warsaw in August 1944 but was almost immediately returned to Germany, perhaps via eastern France. It was last reported at Paderborn in December 1944 but was captured intact by units of the Red Army at war's end in the town of Rogäsen, south of Brandeburg. It is without doubt the Sturmtiger on display to at the Kubinka Museum near Moscow.

Fgst Nr.Unknown 8

A report compiled in early 1945 by the Hauptaussschuss Waffen, the main weapons committee, clearly shows that a total of five new Sturmtigers were completed and accepted by 18 December 1944. As we have established here, the two additional vehicles assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp 1000 and Stu.Mörs.Kp 1002 must have been December-production Sturmtigers this leaves one unaccounted for, here referred to her as Fgst Nr. Unknown 8.

Notes

1. As mentioned earlier, the prototype was probably based on a new Tiger I hull built some at time between April and August 1943.
2. The application of Zimmerit was officially discontinued from 9 September 1944.

Production Modifications

In earlier titles of this series, particularly those dealing with the Tiger I and Tiger II programmes, it was possible to examine the various technical modifications and production changes as they were developed and introduced on a month by month basis. This approach was feasible as each title worked within a definite timeframe. But the Sturmtigers, with the probable exception of the prototype (1), were based on the hull and suspension of recycled Tiger I tanks returned to Germany for major repairs and the original vehicles could have been assembled at any time during the tank's two-year production run.

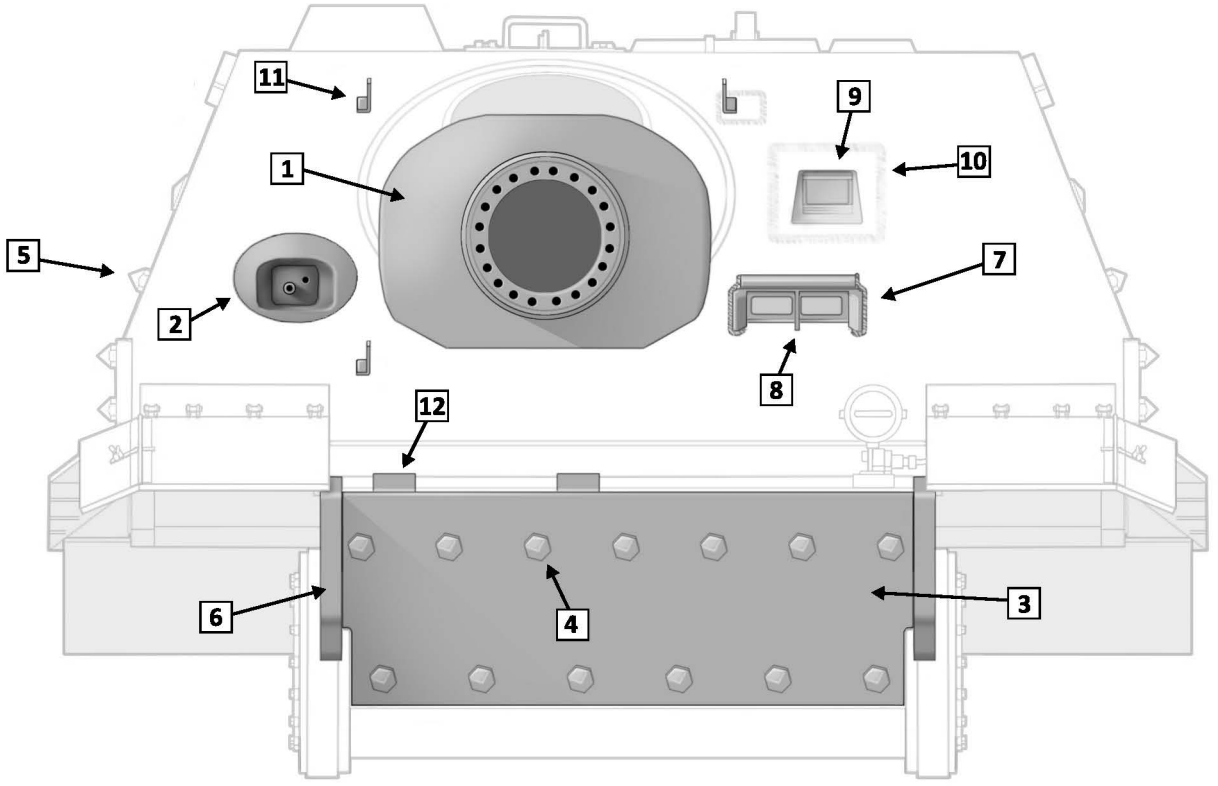
As shown in the charts on pages 50 and 51, the surviving allocation lists do provide most, but not all, the vehicle chassis numbers of the Sturmtigers shipped to units in October and December 1944. This at least allows us to assign a production date to the hulls and some were initially built in November and December 1942 while others were late production vehicles assembled in May 1944. There is no surviving documentation regarding the chassis numbers of the five Sturmtigers built during December 1944. It should also be remembered that some early production features such as the Feifel air-filtering system, parts of the submersible equipment and many other small details could have simply been removed or perhaps upgraded during the final Sturmtiger conversion. It appears that if the hull had received a coat of Zimmerit anti-magnetic mine paste as part of the original assembly process it was retained but not applied to new Sturmtigers. It is also possible that where the coating was badly damaged it was removed entirely (2).

Minor changes were made to the hull throughout Sturmtiger production at Alkett and these are examined here and also shown in the Camouflage & Markings section.

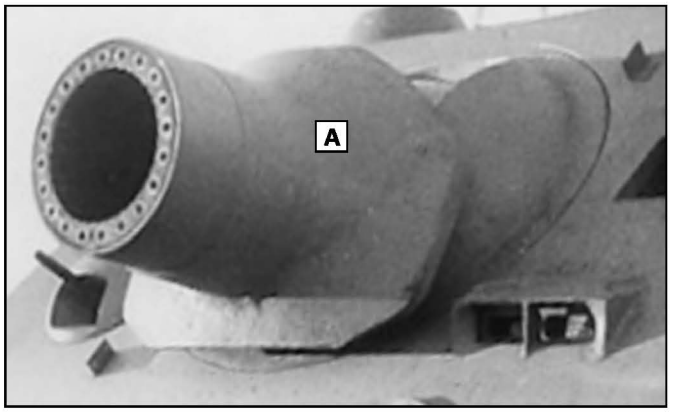
The superstructures were all fabricated at the Brandenburg Eisenwerke plant and photographs show that these underwent a number of changes over time. Also, some additions to both the hull and the superstructure were almost certainly field modifications and it would seem that no two Sturmtigers were exactly the same.

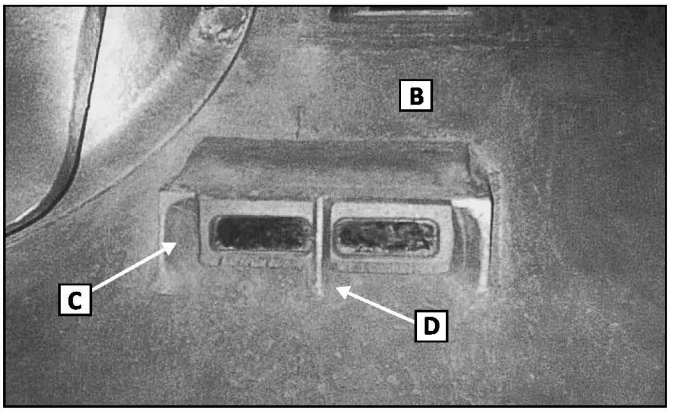
Therefore, to examine the distinguishing features of each vehicle, brief summaries of the nine Sturmtigers that appear in surviving photographs, exactly half the total production number, are presented on the following pages. I have also used this section to attempt to establish an approximate production timeline but I should stress that any conclusions are mine and are just speculation at this time.

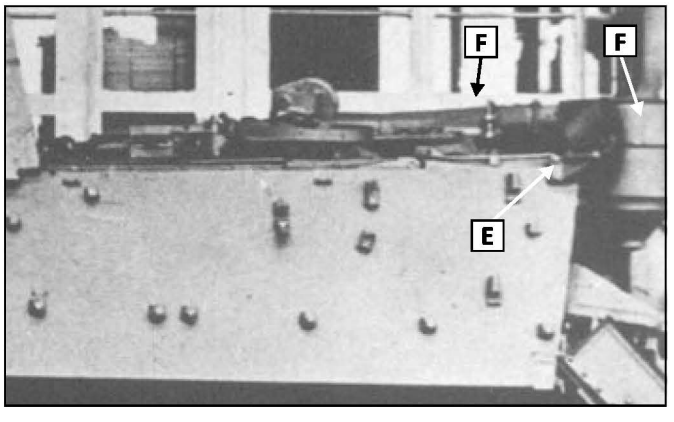
The Sturmtiger of Sturm-Mörs.Batt.1002 abandoned near Calbe in April 1945, also shown on pages 14 and 28. Note the simplified launcher counterweight (1), the L-shaped hanger arrangement (2), vane sight welded to the superstructure front (3), the unusual hull front extension (4) and spare track links on the superstructure rear (5).

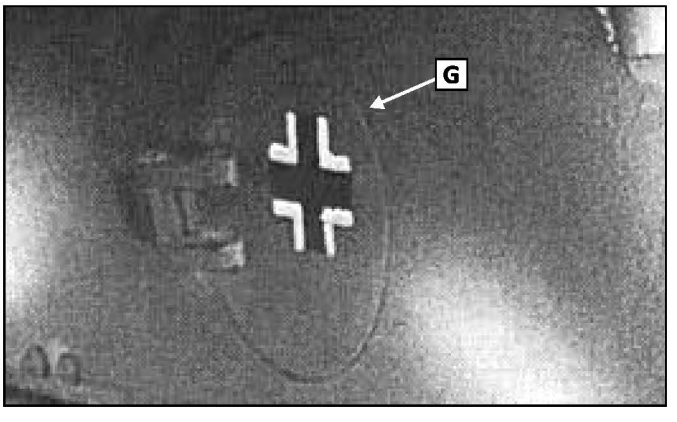


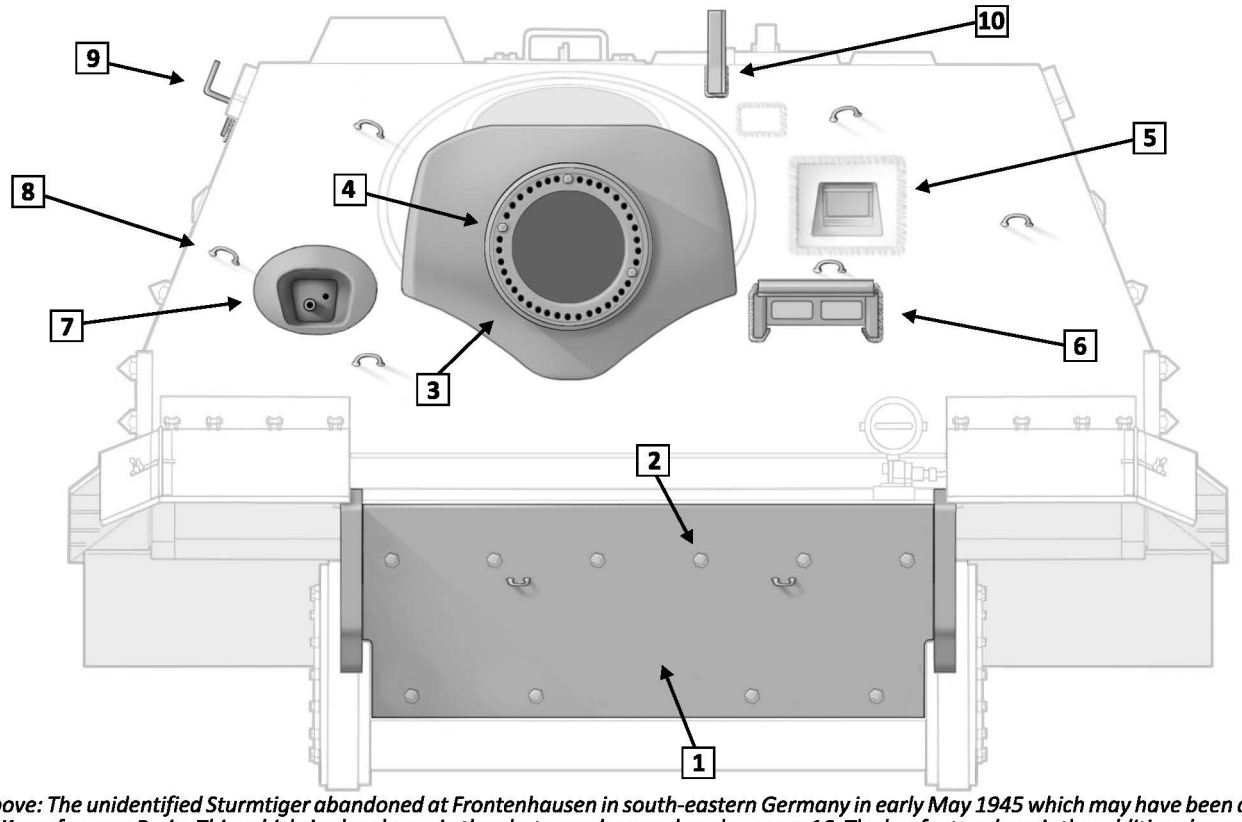
The prototype Sturmtiger assembled at some time between August and October 1943. The most distinctive features are the truncated gun mantlet (1 and A below), the square-shaped aperture of the Kugelblende MG 34 mount (2) and the additional armour plate bolted to the hull front (3). The large bolt covers (4) are the same as those fixed to the hull and superstructure sides (5). The hull front extensions (6) are the straight-sided version which was a standard feature until January 1944. The armoured cover for the driver's periscope (7 and B) was of a more complicated style than the following production models with bevelled sides (C) and it featured a prominent brace welded at the centre (8 and D) and this design may have been unique to the prototype. The armour plate around the sight aperture (9) was fitted flush to the superstructure front and some attempt was made to flatten the weld bead (10). Both aspects seem to have been neglected on later models. The small metal brackets on the superstructure front (11) are thought to have accommodated a cover for the gun but the purpose of the metal tabs along the top edge of the hull front (12) is unknown. As mentioned earlier, there is no reason to assume that the Tiger I hull of this Sturmtiger was taken from a vehicle returned to Germany for repair and, as mentioned in the unit histories, it was probably a new vehicle in the Fgst Nr.250220 to 250465 range assembled between April and August 1943. Although the images reproduced below are of mediocre quality I have included them as they show important features of the prototype Sturmtiger. Just visible at bottom left are the S-Mine dischargers (E), dropped from Tiger I production in October 1943, and complete Feifel air-filtering system (F). The superstructure rear access hatch of the prototype (G) did not have an external handle. I believe that this was also quite possibly a feature of the first two production series Sturmtigers assembled in July or very early August 1944.





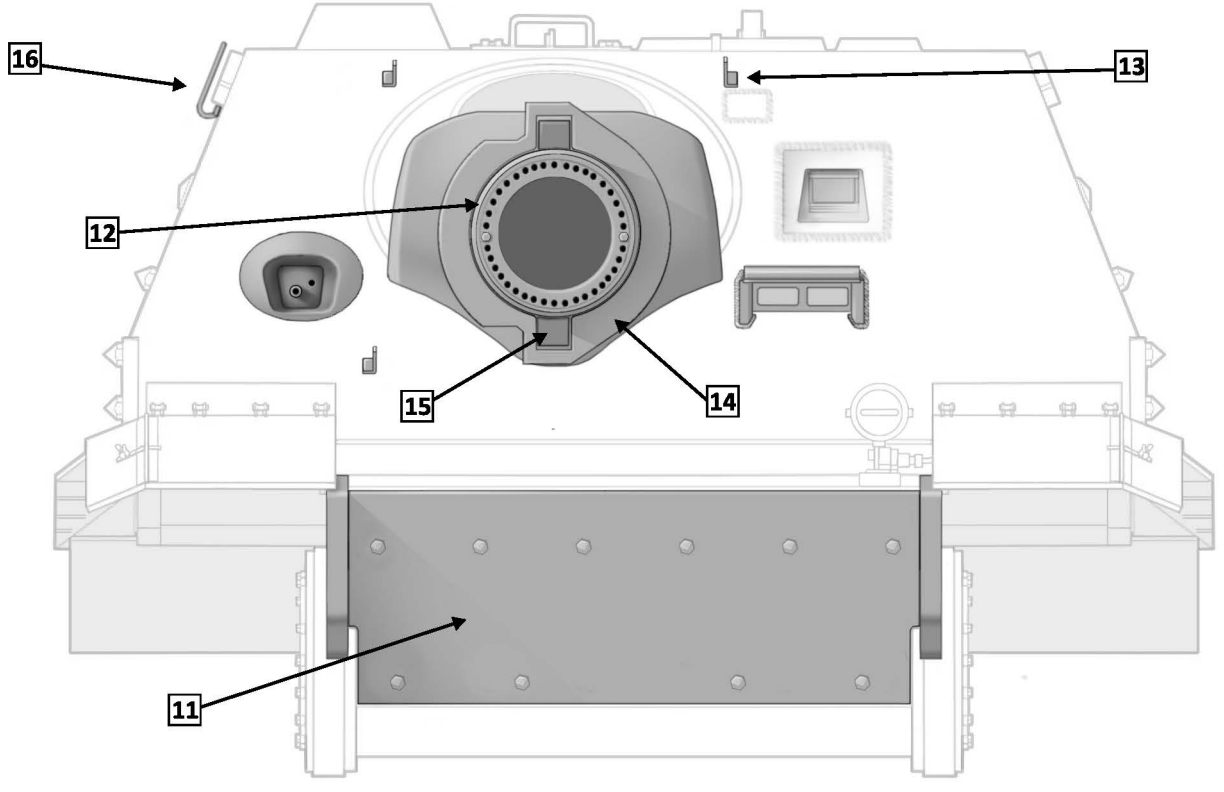


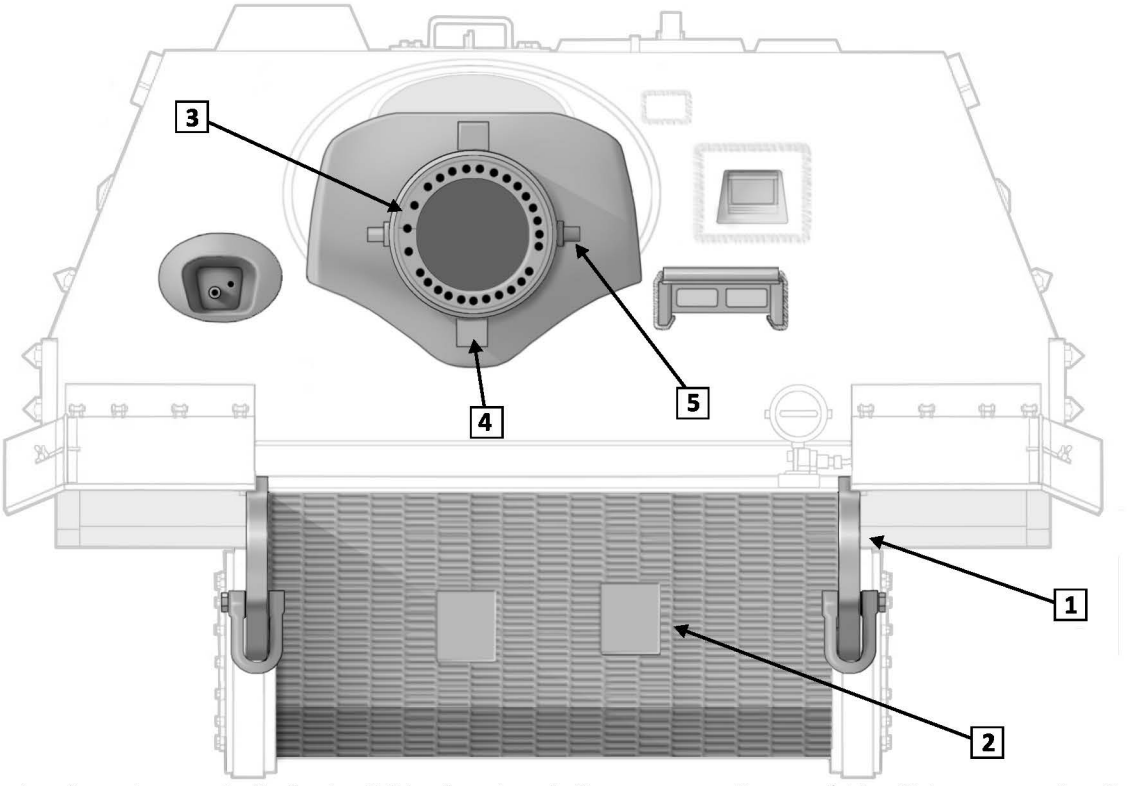




Above: The unidentified Sturmtiger abandoned at Frontenhausen in south-eastern Germany in early May 1945 which may have been attached to Kampfgruppe Prein. This vehicle is also shown in the photograph reproduced on page 16. The key feature here is the additional armour plate on the hull front (1) fixed in place with small bolts (2) without the large conical covers of the prototype. Note that the launcher mantlet (3) now features a curved extension on the lower edge, presumably to limit the angle at which the launcher could be depressed. The vent holes have been increased in number (4) but are slightly smaller and the cover is held in place by three bolts. The sight aperture (5) is still welded in place but set back slightly from the superstructure glacis. The driver's periscope cover (6) is of a much simplified design which appears to have been retained until the end of production. The aperture of the Kugelblende mount (7) is no longer square and this modification was also a standard feature beginning with the July/August models. The proliferation of small metal loops (8) welded to the glacis and hull front was continued onto the superstructure sides and can be seen in our illustration on page 19. Just two L-shaped hangers were fitted to the superstructure side (9), on the right only, and these and the vane sight (10) may have been late additions.

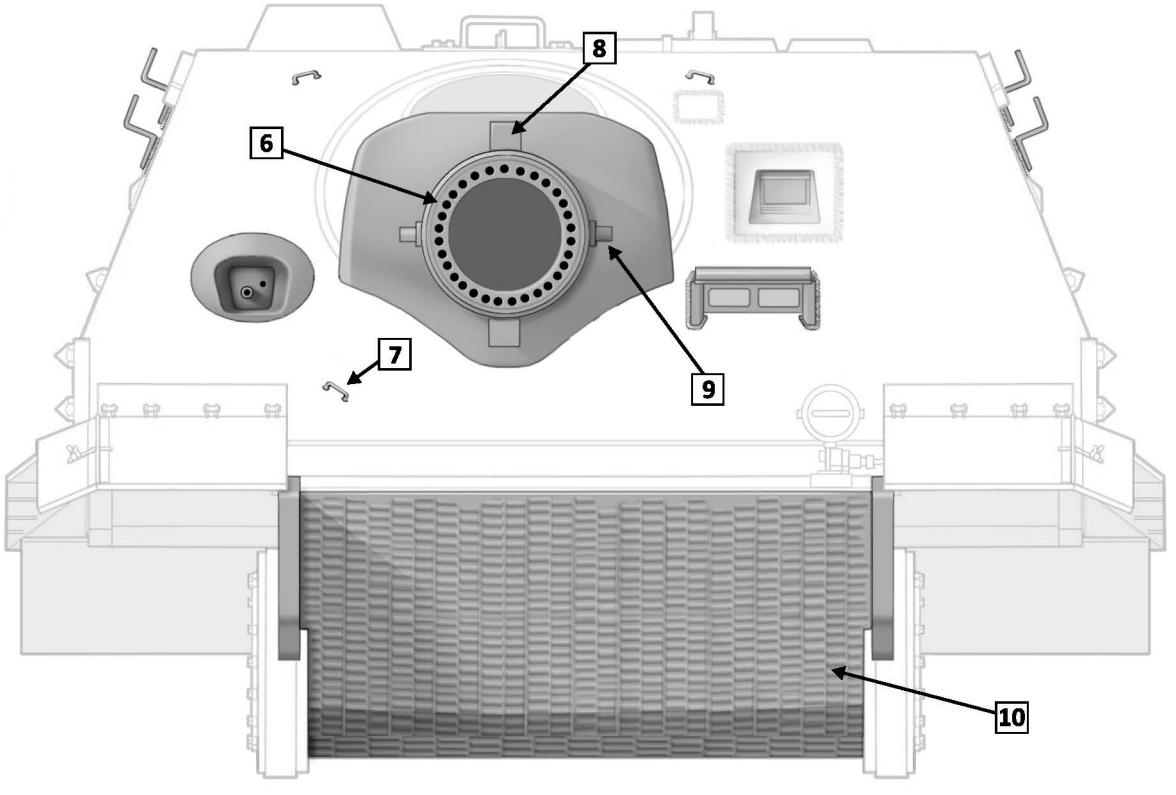
Below: The Sturmtiger of Sturm-Mörs-Batt.1001 lost at Hützmert north of Drolshagen during the fighting in the Ruhr Pocket in April 1945. This vehicle is fitted with the additional armour on the hull front (11) in the same manner as the Frontenhausen Sturmtiger shown above but lacks the small metal loops, suggesting that they may have been a field modification. The RW 61 launcher with its thirty-eight vent holes (12) is also similar but far more symmetrically arranged. Note that the metal tabs seen on the superstructure glacis of the prototype have been retained (13). The rather complicated counterweight (14) probably entered production in mid-September but may not have been a universal fitting as many vehicles are seen with the locating lugs (15) only. The two hooks on the right side of the superstructure (16) are almost certainly a field modification. This Sturmtiger is also depicted in the photograph on page 12 and in the Camouflage & Markings section on page 20.

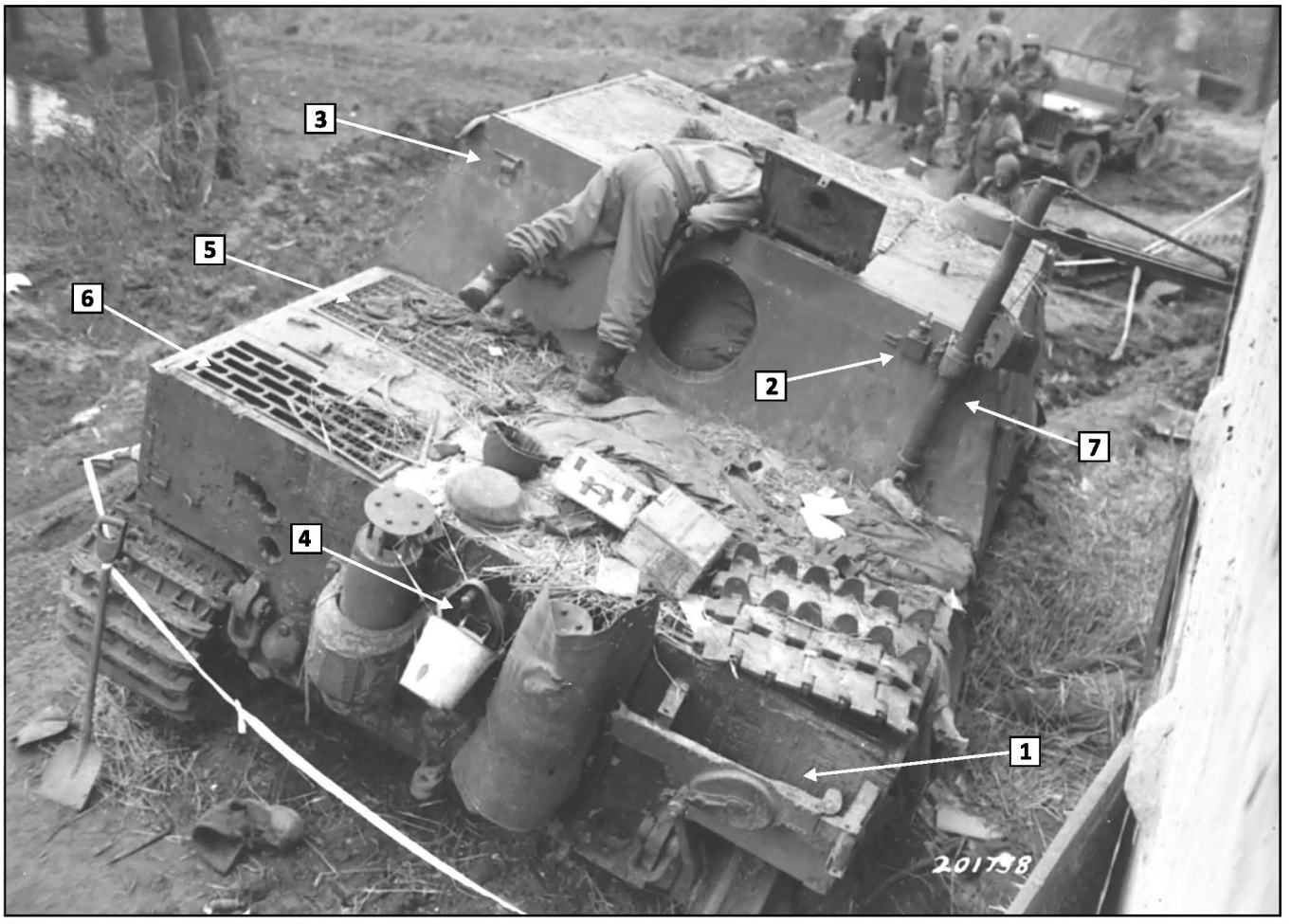




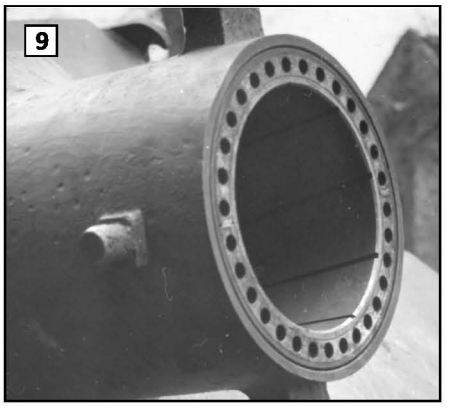
Above: Said to have been photographed in October 1944 at Sennelager in Germany, several images of this vehicle were reproduced in an official training manual. If the date is correct, this Sturmtiger would have been one of the ten assembled in September and it does not have the hangers on the superstructure sides which were probably incorporated late in that month. It is based on a post-January 1944 chassis, as evidenced by the notched hull extensions (1), and may be Fgst Nr.251168 which was assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp 1000 on 26 October 1944 but not shipped until 1 December. Note the two areas on the hull front where patches of Zimmerit have been neatly removed (2). The twenty-seven vent holes of the launcher barrel (3) are of a similar size to those seen on the prototype and the cover is simply welded in place. The outer sleeve of the barrel is fitting with the locating lugs (4 and 5) but there is no evidence of a counterweight in the many surviving photographs of this Sturmtiger. This vehicle is also depicted in the image reproduced on page 8 and the profile on page 21.

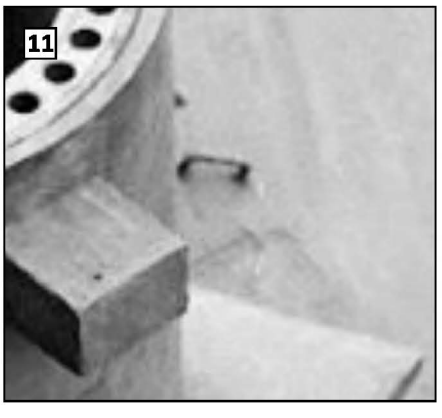
Below: The Sturmtiger of Sturm.Mors-Batt.1000 disabled in the streets of Oberembt in late February 1945. Based on Tiger I Fgst Nr.250327 initially assembled in May 1943, this vehicle is mentioned in the October 1944 allocation list confirming that the conversion took place in the previous September. The RW 61 launcher has thirty-one large vent holes (6) and the cover is welded in place. The metal tabs of the prototype have been replaced by small loops (7) which are more angular than those fitted to the Frontenhausen Sturmtiger. This vehicle also featured a number of track hangers on the hull side which are shown in the profile on pages 22 and 23. Although the locating lugs (8 and 9) have been welded to the outer sleeve of the barrel, there is no sign of a counterweight and this vehicle was also photographed from many angles. It seems unlikely that crews would have gone to the trouble of removing the heavy counterweights, which were welded in place, and it is probable that insufficient supplies were available when these vehicles were assigned to operational units. Note also the unusual application of Zimmerit. This Sturmtiger is also examined on the following page, page 9, page 24 and page 25.

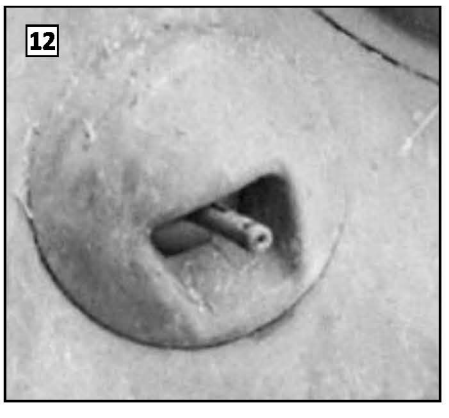


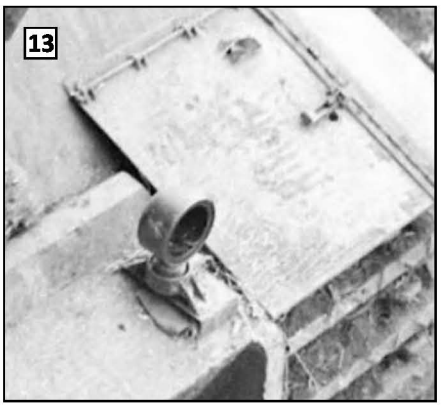


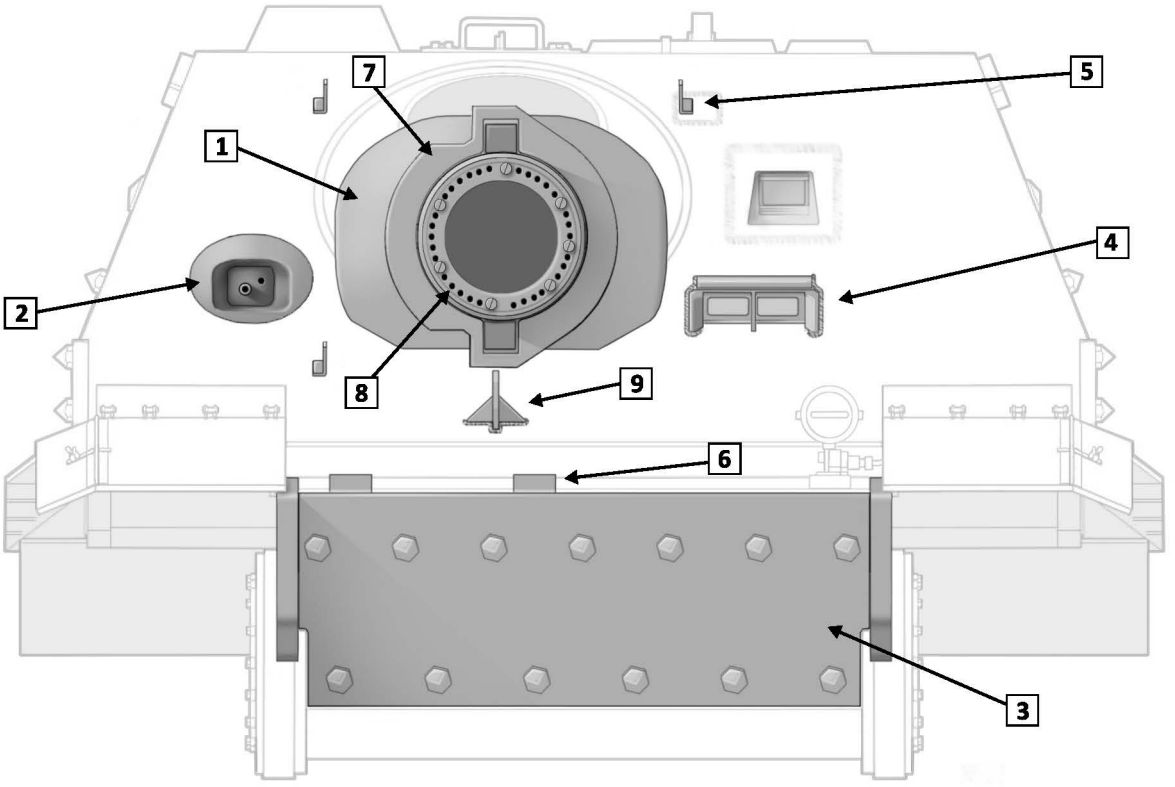
Above: The Sturmtiger of Sturm.Mors-Batt.1000 depicted at the bottom of the previous page. Visible features here include the 20-ton jack held on the hull rear plate (1), the insulator of the Fu 5 radio aerial (2), what appears to be a hanger for a spare track link (3) and the engine crank starter base plate (4). Mesh screens (5) were provided for all the engine deck air intakes (6) but were easily lost or damaged. This photograph also provides a good view of the ammunition loading crane (7). Shown below, from the same vehicle: 8. The ball mounting of the RW 61 rocket launcher. Note the protective side sections and the roughly cut edges of the mantlet. 9. The vent holes and rifling of the launcher. Note that the cover is held in place by two small welds. Note also the locating lugs for the counterweight. 10. The inner surface of the ammunition loading hatch showing the Nahverteidigungswaffe close defence weapon. Note the commander's periscope cover at the lower edge of this image. 11. One of the metal loops mentioned on the previous page. 12. The Kugelblende MG 34 mount. 13. The remains of the Bosch headlight and left side front fender. Note that the latter has been coated with Zimmerit.





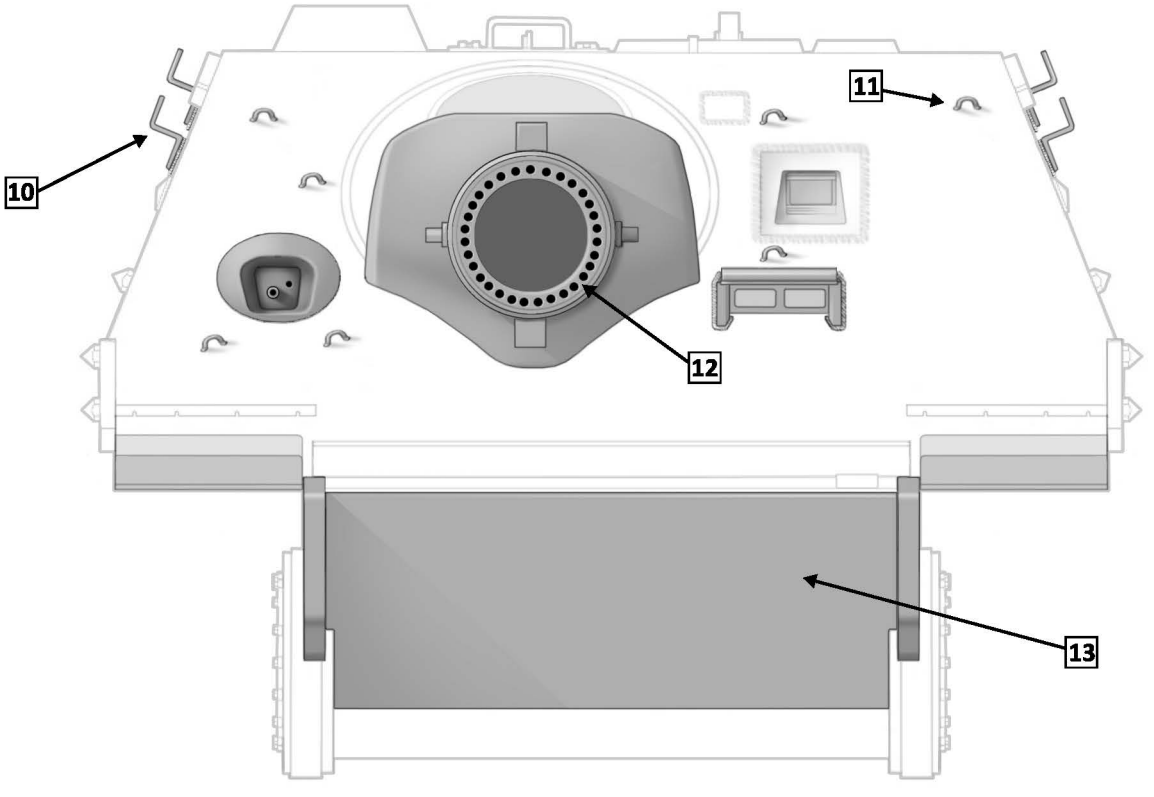


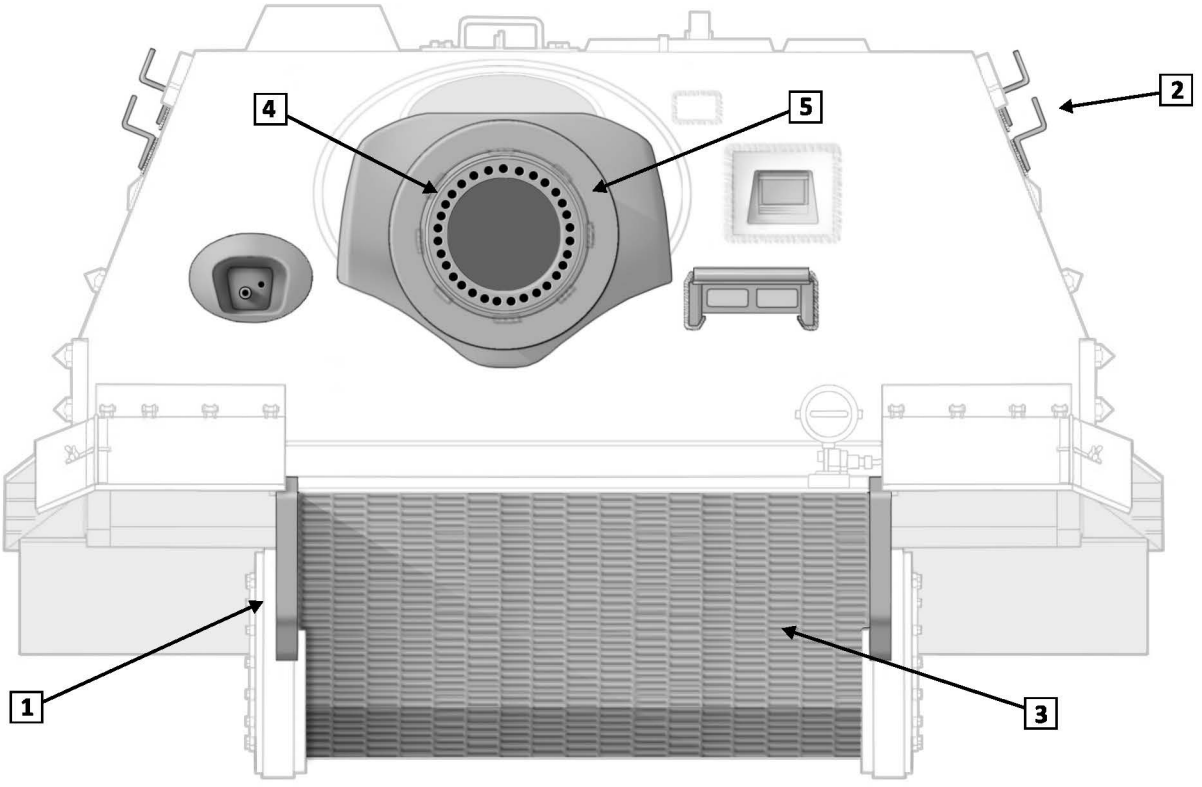




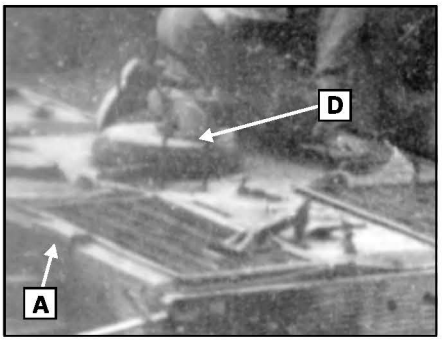
Above: The prototype Sturmtiger as it appeared in May 1945 when it was captured by units of the Red Army in Rogäsen, a small town south of the Brandenburg Eisenwerke at Kirchmöser. A number of distinctive features are still visible including the launcher mantlet (1) which was probably unique to this vehicle, the square-shaped aperture of the Kugelblende MG 34 mount (2), the additional armour plate bolted to the hull front with large bolt covers (3), the armoured cover for the driver's periscope (4), the small metal brackets on the superstructure glacis (5) and the metal tabs along the top edge of the hull front (6). But the RW 61 rocket launcher has very obviously been fitted with a counterweight (7), a new inner sleeve with thirty-one vent holes (8) and the cover is now held in place by seven bolts. The metal flange welded to the superstructure glacis below the mantlet (9) was probably intended to fulfil the role of the curved versions. The brackets and clasps on the left side of the hull were retained. This vehicle was last reported with Panzer-Ersatz-Abteilung 500 at Paderborn in December 1944 and it has been suggested that it was at Kirchmöser to be fitted with a fighting compartment made from armour plate but it does seem unlikely that the earlier parts would have been transferred so faithfully to a new superstructure.

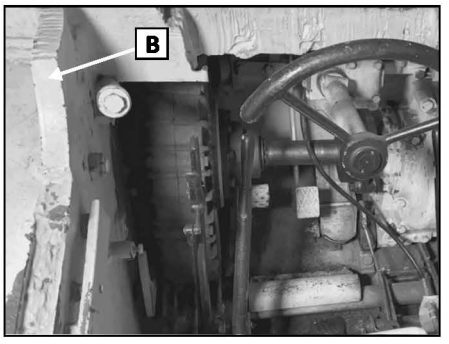
Below: The Sturmtiger found near Lichtentanne, a small town in eastern Germany near the present-day border with the Czech Republic, in April or May 1945. It is possible that this vehicle was originally assigned to Sturm.Mörs-Kp.1001 and at some time attached to a Kampfgruppe made up of the remnants of 2.Panzer-Division. It is also shown and discussed in the Camouflage & Markings section on page 25. It is fitted with the superstructure hangers (10) which appear to have been common to later production Sturmtigers but in this case there are just two and they are rather haphazardly placed as can be seen from our profile. Note the small metal loops (11) which are very similar in shape and placement to the vehicle shown at the top of page 56. Note also the total lack of Zimmerit which is quite unusual (13). I have assumed the number and style of the vent holes (12) as the only available photograph is not clear enough to make any definitive claim.

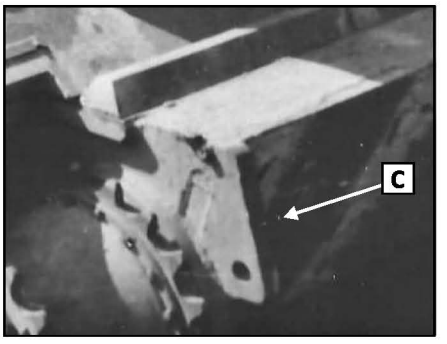


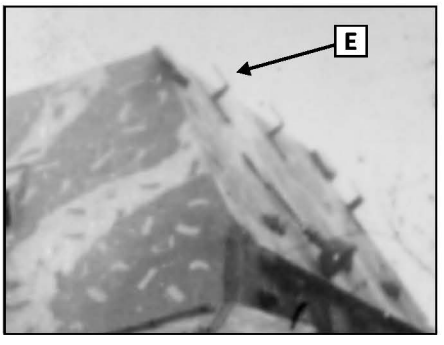


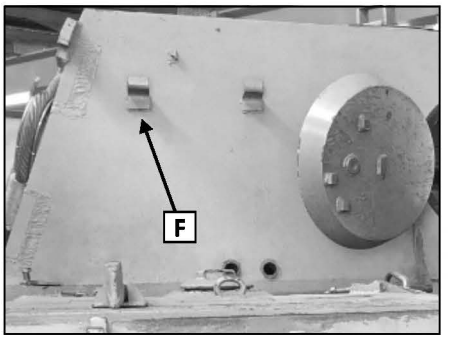
Above: Just three of this company's Sturmtigers have been positively identified in contemporary photographs and all exhibit the same general appearance including an elaborate factory-applied camouflage scheme which is shown in the Camouflage & Markings section. Abandoned near the town of Ebendorf, north of Magdeburg in eastern Germany, the vehicle depicted above was assigned to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1002 in December 1944. At the end of the war it was shipped to the Aberdeen Proving Ground where it remained until the 1980s when it was gifted to the Wehrtechnisches Studiensammlung Koblenz and it has for sometime been on loan to the Deutsches Panzermuseum at Munster. For many years it was claimed that this vehicle was built on the chassis of Tiger I Fgst Nr.250174 which was initially assembled in March 1943 but I have been unable to establish where this claim originated. The vehicle features a number of much later modifications, most notably the remains of an external gun travel lock (A below) which was not introduced into production until November 1943, with Fgst Nr.250635, and discontinued in February 1944. The steel T-stanchion of the inner hull located next to the driver's position (B), where Henschel habitually stamped the number, was largely removed as part of the conversion process and as far as I know it is not marked elsewhere on the vehicle. In addition, there is no record of Fgst Nr.250174 in the allocation lists which have since come to light but not every vehicle is referred to by a chassis number and as we know, a further five Sturmtigers were assembled after 1 December 1944. In the same month a Sturmtiger based on the hull of Fgst Nr.251174, originally assembled in May 1944, was shipped to Stu.Mörs.Kp.1002 and recent authoritative accounts imply that the original contention that the vehicle was based on Fgst Nr.250174 was due to some kind of typographical error, 251174 being the correct number. But the Sturmtiger recovered from Ebendorf and on display now at Munster has several distinctive features of early-production hulls such as the straight-edged hull front extensions (1 and C below), phased out from December 1943 or January 1944 and the first pattern armoured cover for the aperture for the submersible equipment (D), replaced from May 1944. Further, there is also evidence that it was at some time fitted with the Feifel air-filtering system. The three L-shaped hangers welded to the superstructure sides (2 and E) are now standard and an additional two hangers were fitted to the rear on the top left corner (F). The Zimmerit coating (3) has been applied in the texture commonly seen on Henschel Tiger I tanks. The vent holes of the launcher, thirty-one on this version (4), are slightly larger than those shown on the previous page and most distinctive feature, the much simplified barrel counterweight (5), is welded to the outer sleeve with evenly spaced weld beads (G).

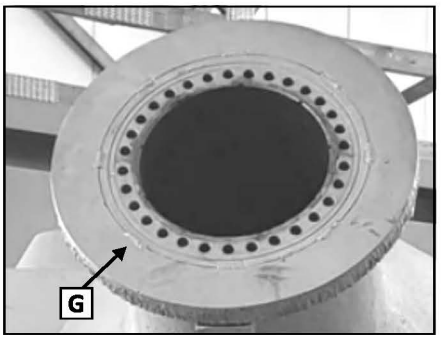


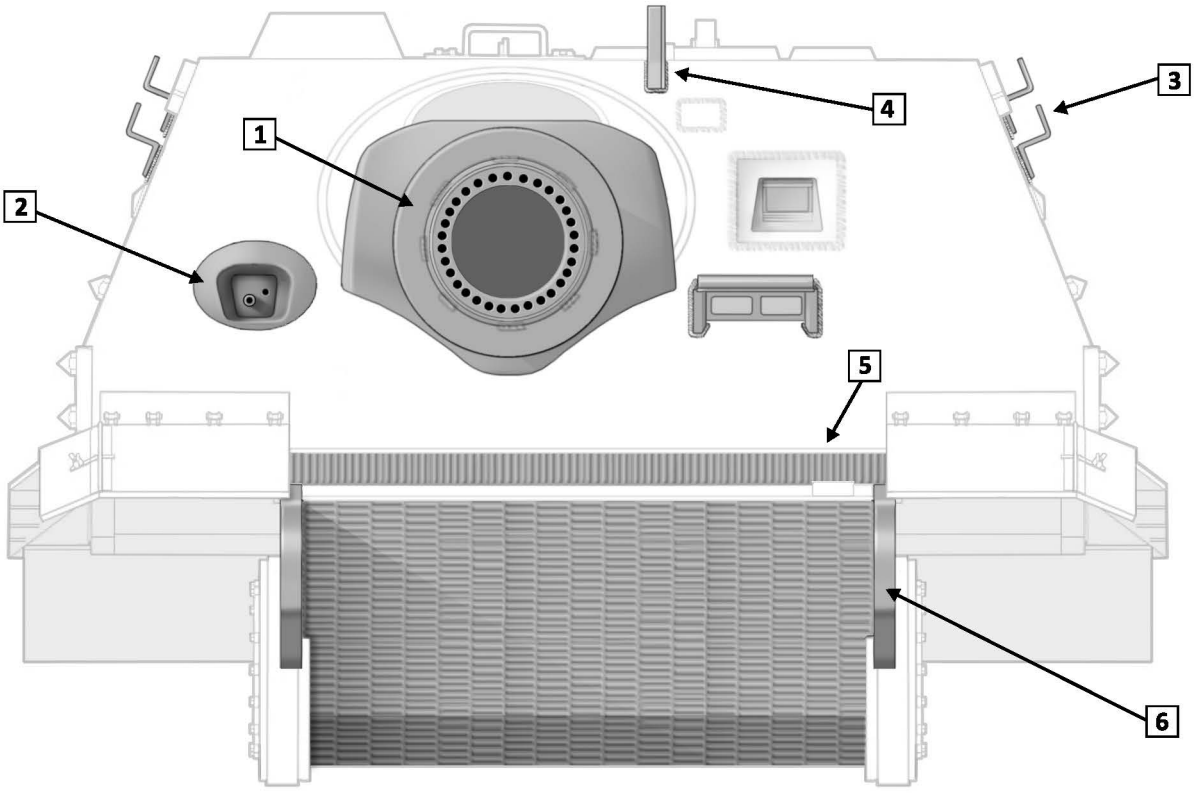






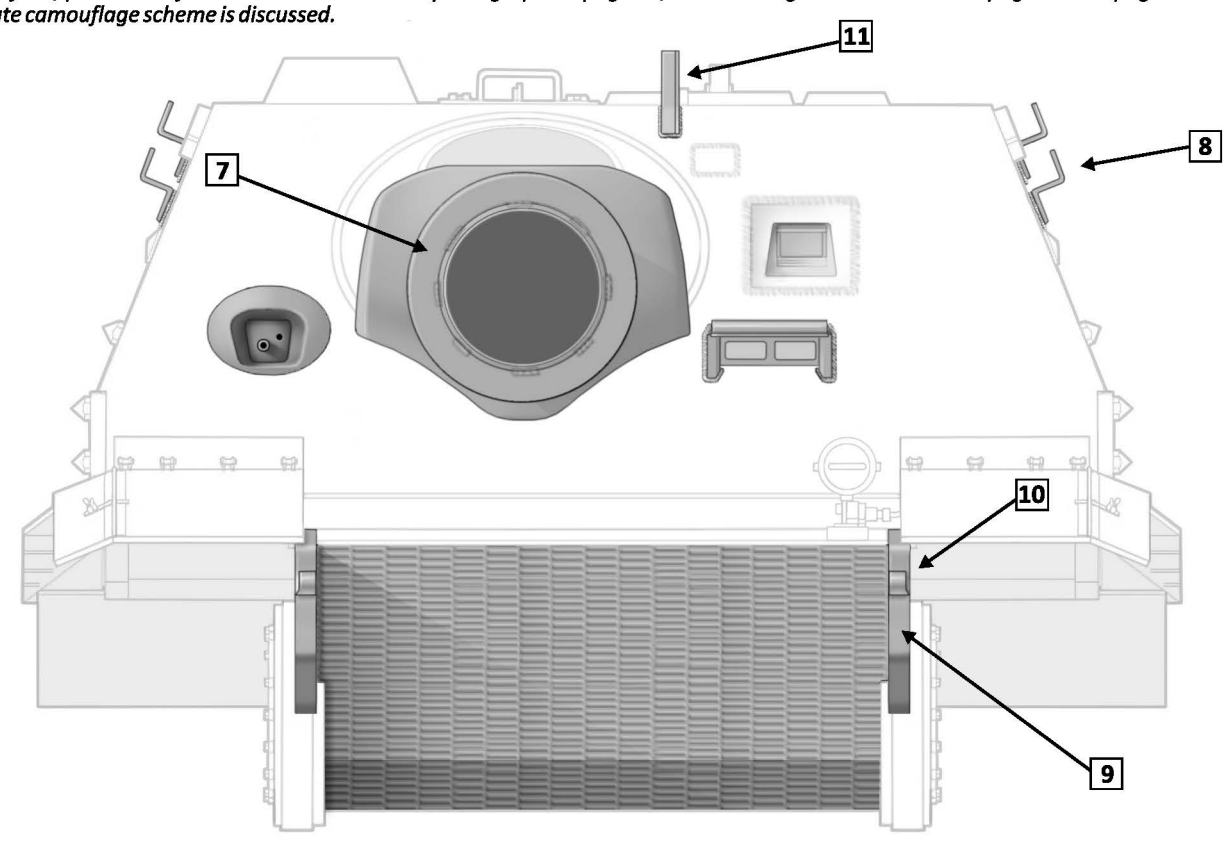




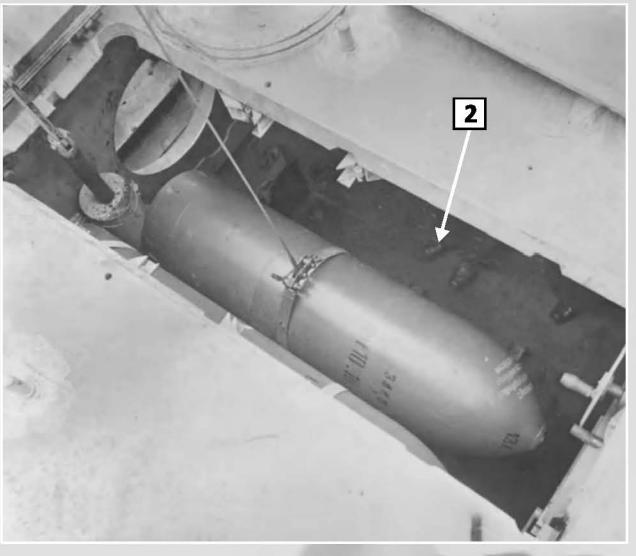


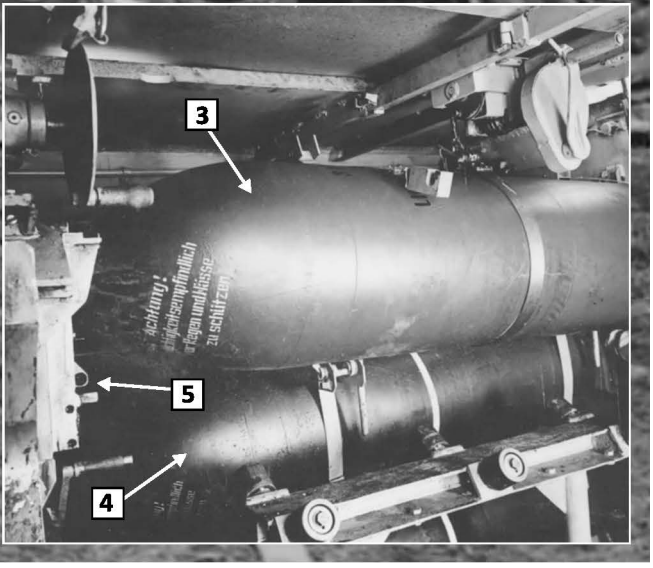
Above: The Sturmtiger of Stu.Mörs.Kp.1002 recovered from the Rauherfeld rock quarry, just to the south-east of the town of Menden in mid-April 1945. This vehicle was painted in the same elaborate factory-applied camouflage scheme as the Sturmtiger depicted on the previous page. From the available photographs it can be seen that most of the technical features are also the same, including the simple launcher counterweight (1), angled Kugelblende aperture (2), and three hangers on each side of the superstructure (3). Unfortunately no rear view has survived but it would seem safe to assume that similar hangers were also fitted to the superstructure rear. The vane sight (4), welded to the superstucture front, may be a feature of the last production models. Unusually, the bullet splash guard (5) seems to have received a coat of Zimmerit. Note the notched front extensions (6), indicating that this Sturmtiger was based on a hull built during or after January 1944.

The Sturmtiger of Sturm-Mörs.Kp.1002 abandoned near Calbe in April 1945, shown in the photograph reproduced on page 54. It is fitted with the simplified launcher counterweight (7), the three-track hanger arrangement (8), on each side of the superstructure with an additional two hangers on the superstructure rear, although they are not visible here. A rear view shows that the hull was fitted with the bases for an external gun travel lock meaning that it was built between November 1943 and February 1944. The notched hull front extensions (9) narrow the time frame further to January or February 1944 but the unusual ring-like attachment welded to each extension (10) may have been a field modification effected by the previous owners. As mentioned above, the vane sight welded to the superstructure front (11), was probably a later, perhaps final, production feature. In addition to the photograph on page 54, this Sturmtiger is also shown on page 14 and page 28 were its elaborate camouflage scheme is discussed.



Below: The Sturmtiger shown at the top of page 57, said to have been photographed at Sennelager in October 1944. Due to the massive weight of the 38cm projectile, each was lifted into the vehicle by means of a crane and winch (1) which was permanently attached to the superstructure rear to the right of the access hatch. This system, including the design of the cranes, was retained throughout the vehicle's production run. A removable hatch in the superstructure roof (2) allowed the 38cm rounds to be lowered into the fighting compartment.





At right: Each vehicle was capable of carrying fourteen projectiles with one ready to fire in the RW 61 tube, another on the loading tray as shown here (3) and a further twelve stored in racks on either side of the superstructure interior (4). The latter could be moved onto the loading tray and then to a position in front of the breech by a system of sliding brackets, rollers and a small winch. The fuses were then primed and the rocket was pushed into the breech (5). Despite the projectile's weight, the whole process could be accomplished by one man. Sighting was conducted with the RW 61 fully loaded.

PANZER-STURM-MÖRSER-KOMPANIE, 1944-1945

All formations of the German Army were organised according to detailed tables of establishment referred to as Kriegsstärkenachweisung (KstN) which showed the official composition of a unit, listing the exact number of personnel and type of equipment from vehicles to small arms. The tables were numbered and dated, the latter being all-important as many KstN were updated and the original number retained. The KstN were accompanied by Kriegsausrüstungsnachweisung (KAN) which listed minor items in detail such as tools and fuel containers but these need not concern us here. Official KstN and KAN for the Sturmtiger units were not issued until 15 September 1944 by which time the prototype and early production vehicles had been in service for some time. It should be noted that this establishment represented the ideal and it is highly likely that units never received their full allocation of support vehicles. A summary of a Gliederung, or organisational chart, states that only the company headquarters was assigned an Sdkfz 251/18 artillery observation halftrack whereas the KstN clearly shows that the headquarters and the platoons were each authorised one vehicle. Unfortunately that document is undated but the entry giving the company's personnel strength as seventy-nine would suggest that it was published after the February reorganisation. As with most German units at this stage of the war, civilian cars may have been substituted for the authorised 4-seat vehicles. As mentioned in the unit histories, the three companies were transferred to the Artillery Inspectorate in late February 1945 and the number of Sturmtigers authorised for each was raised from four to six. This was more in keeping with the organisation of an artillery battery but it is not known if the additional vehicles formed a third platoon or the number of Sturmtigers in each platoon was increased to three, as is shown here. I have rendered the unit designations and terms here exactly as they are written in the KstN while the English translation is mine.

Gruppe-Führer — Company commander

Kompanietrupp
Company Headquarters Troop

2 X leichte Personenkraftwagen (4 sitzig)

le.Krad 350 ccm

Krad mit Seitenweg

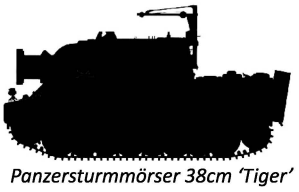
mittl.Beob.Panz.Wg (Sdkfz 251/18)
Medium Armoured Artillery Observation Vehicle

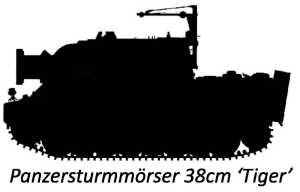
leichte Feldkabeltrupp (mot)
Field Telephone Troop

2 X leichte Personenkraftwagen (4 sitzig)

The leichte Personenwagen (4 Sitzig), or light 4-seater cars are specifically referred to as VW Typ 82 light cars in the Gleiderung mentioned above. Similarly, each Sturmtiger platoon is assigned a motorcycle.

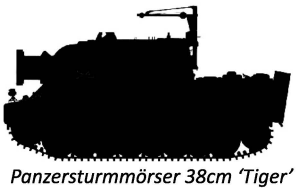
1.Zug

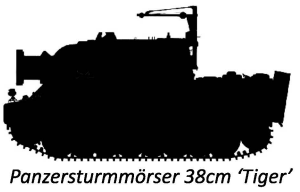

Panzersturmmörser 38cm 'Tiger'


Panzersturmmörser 38cm 'Tiger'

mittl.Beob.Panz.Wg (Sdkfz 251/18)

2.Zug


Panzersturmmörser 38cm 'Tiger'


Panzersturmmörser 38cm 'Tiger'

mittl.Beob.Panz.Wg (Sdkfz 251/18)

Kfz.Instandsetzungsgruppe
Repair and Maintenance Group

leichte Personenkraftwagen (4 sitzig)

2 X Lastkraftwagen, 3t
2 X Lorries, 3-ton

Tross — Supply and Baggage Section including Medical Officer

1 X Lastkraftwagen, 3t für Krankenträger
1 X Lorry, 3-ton Ambulance

1 X Lastkraftwagen, 3t für kl.Feldkochherd und Verpflegung
1 X Lorry, 3-ton Field Kitchen

1 X Lastkraftwagen, 3t für Gerät und Gepäck
1 X Lorry, 3-ton Weapons and Baggage

3 X Lastkraftwagen, 3t für Betreibsstoff
3 X Lorries, 3-ton Fuel

4 X Lastkraftwagen, 3t für Munition
4 X Lorries, 3-ton Ammunition

A handwritten note on the second page of the KstN states that a Gemischte-Versorgungsgruppe, or mixed supply group, was added on 5 October 1944 but gives no further details. This may have some connection to the units described as Nachschubstaffel and Versch.Staffeln (sic) in the Gliederung summary, which were equipped with three and nine Lastkraftwagen, 3t respectively and may have replaced the Kfz.Instandsetzungsgruppe and Tross section.

Dragon Models Ltd
B1-10/F., 603-609 Castle Peak Rd,
Kong Nam Industrial Building,
Tsuen Wan, N. T., Hong Kong
www.dragon-models.com

Tamiya Inc
Shizuoka City, Japan
www.tamiya.com

Italeri S.p.A.
via Pradazzo 6/b,
40012 Calderara di Reno, Bologna, Italy
www.italeri.com

AFV Club
No. 71, Ruigan New Residential Quarter,
Sec. 1, Mingdeng Rd., Ruifang Dist.,
New Taipei City 224006,
Taiwan
www.afv-club.com

Trumpeter/Hobby Boss
NanLong Industrial Park,SanXiang,
ZhongShan,GuangDong, P.R. China
www.trumpeter-china.com
Www.hobbyboss.com

EMP3d
Maciejowice 24
05-600 Maciejowice.
Polandwww.emp3d.eu

Mato Tanks
190 Minets Point Rd, Unit 5,
Barrie, Ontario,
L4N 8J8
Canada
www.matotanks.com

Sturmpanzer.com
www.sturmpanzer.com
Copies of original documents including KstN, vehicle allocation lists and more.
Highly recommended.

Hauler
Jan Sobotka,
Moravská 38, 620 00 Brno,
Czech Republic
www.hauler.cz

Voyager
Room 501, No.411 4th Village,
SPC Jinshan District, Shanghai 200540,
P.R.China
www.voyagermodel.com

Griffon Model
Suite 501, Bldg 01, 418 Middle Longpan Rd,
Nanjing, P.R. China
www.griffonmodel.com

Aber
ul. Jalowcowa 15, 40-750 Katowice, Poland
www.aber.net.pl

E.T. Model
I can personally recommend this company for their service.
www.etmodeller.com

Friulmodel
H 8142. Urhida, Nefelejcs u. 2., Hungary
www.friulmodel.hu

Modelkasten
Chiyoda-ku Kanda, Nishiki-Cho 1-7, Tokyo, Japan
www.modelkasten.com
Very difficult to navigate but worthwhile.

Mironius Models
www.mironious.com

Mato Tanks
190 Minets Point Rd, Unit 5,
Barrie,
Ontario, L4N 8J8
Canada
www.matotanks.com

Eduard Model Accessories
Mirova 170, 435 21 Obrnice,
Czech Republic
www.eduard.com

Master Club
www.masterclub.ru
It appears that this firm is closely associated with Armour35, a Russsian mail-order firm.

RB Model
Powstancow Wlkp.29B,
64-360 Zbaszyn,
Poland
www.rbmodel.com

Passion Models
This Japanese company is affiliated with MS Models Japan, one of the country's largest retailers of modelling products and AFV models.
www.passionmodels.jp

Royal Model
Via E. Montale, 19-95030,
Pedara, Italy
www.royalmodel.com

Trex
An offshoot of Dino Trading Company Ltd.
Room 302, Building No.8, Hongzuijie,
Ganjingzi District, Dalian,
P.R. China
www.t-rex-studio.com

DEF.Model
Dodo Production, 3F, Modeok-ro 51,
Sasang-ku, Busan City
Republic of Korea
www.defmodel.com

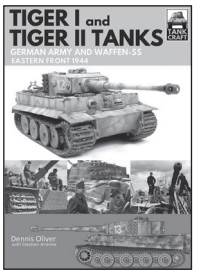
Rye Field Model
www.ryefield-model.com

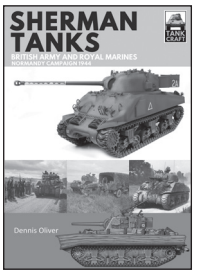
In writing this book I referred to a number of printed works including *Der Panzer-Kampfwagen Tiger und Seine Abarten* by Walter J. Spielberger and Hilary L. Doyle, *Panzer Tracts No.8: Sturmgeschuetz, s.Pak to Sturmmoerser* by Thomas L. Jentz with illustrations by Hilary Louis Doyle, *Panzer Tracts No.23: Panzer Production from 1933 to 1945* and *Germany's Tiger Tanks, D.W. to Tiger I: Design, Production & Modifications*, both by Thomas L. Jentz and Hilary Louis Doyle and *Sturmtiger and Sturmpanzer in Combat* by Waldemar Trojca and Markus Jaugitz. I also found the Panzerwrecks series of books to contain much helpful, and often obscure, material. Information regarding the allocation of the assembled Sturmtigers was gleaned from the original Führungliste, production statistics and transportation records which are available from Sturmpanzer.com and their contact details appear above. I would also like to acknowledge the contributors to both the Axis History and Feldgrau online forums, particularly Martin Block, and the now defunct Tiger in Focus website. The latter was the source of a number of magazine and newspaper articles describing the fate of a number of Sturmtigers and their impact on small towns and villages of Germany in the last weeks of the war. As always, I am indebted to Karl Berne, Valeri Polokov and J.Howard Parker for their invaluable assistance with the photographs and period insignia.

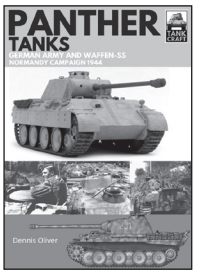
The Sturmtiger of Stu.Mörs.Kp.1002 abandoned at Menden in April 1945. The circular counterweight on the barrel and the distinctive camouflage pattern seem to have been distinguishing features of this company's vehicles. Note the notched extensions at the hull front suggesting that the chassis was built after January 1944. This vehicle is also shown on page 27 and page 61.

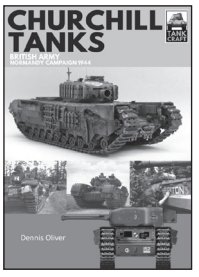
TANK CRAFT

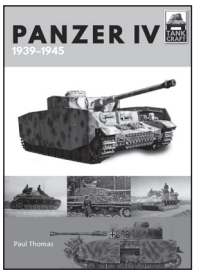
The aim of these innovative series is to provide modelmakers and enthusiasts with a new standard of primarily visual reference to both the full-size vehicles and their models, using detailed line drawings, plans and photographs, many in full colour. Each book is devoted to a famous military vehicle – chosen for its popularity as a modelling subject – but will range from main battle tanks to 4x4s.

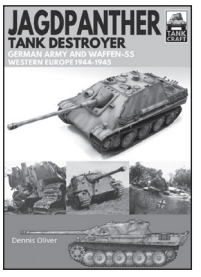












Tiger I and Tiger II: Tanks of the German Army and Waffen-SS
Eastern Front 1944

Sherman Tanks of the British Army and Royal Marines
Normandy Campaign 1944

Panther Tanks
Germany Army and Waffen SS, Normandy Campaign 1944

Churchill Tanks
British Army, North-West Europe 1944–45

Panzer IV
1939–1945

Jagdpanther Tank Destroyer
German Army and Waffen-SS, Western Europe 1944–1945

Panzer I & II
Blueprint for Blitzkrieg 1933–1941

T-34
Russia's Armoured Spearhead

Tiger I
German Army Heavy Tank, Southern Front, North Africa, Sicily and Italy, 1942–1945

Cromwell and Centaur Tanks
British Army and Royal Marines, North-west Europe 1944–1945

Centurion
Armoured Hero of Post-War Tank Battles

Sherman Tanks, US Army, North-Western Europe, 1944–1945

Tiger I and Tiger II Tanks, German Army and Waffen-SS, The Last Battles in the West, 1945

T-54/55
Soviet Cold War Main Battle Tank

Tank Destroyer
Achilles and M10, British Army Anti-Tank Units, Western Europe, 1944–1945

Panther Tanks: Germany Army and Waffen-SS
Defence of the West, 1945

Chieftain
British Cold War Main Battle Tank

Stug III and IV
German Army, Waffen-SS and Luftwaffe, Western Front, 1944-1945

Challenger 1
British Main Battle Tank of the Gulf War

Tiger I – German Army Heavy Tank
Eastern Front, Summer 1943

M1 Abrams
The US's Main Battle Tank in American and Foreign Service, 1981–2019

M48 Patton
American Post-war Main Battle Tank

Panther Tanks: German Army Panzer Brigades
Western and Eastern Fronts, 1944–1945

Panzer III: German Army Light Tank
Operation Barbarossa 1941

Challenger 2
British Main Battle Tank of the Gulf War

Leopard 2
NATO's First Line of Defence, 1979–2020

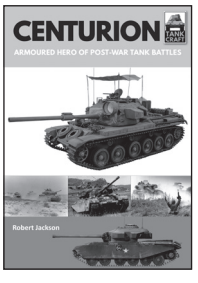
Tiger I & Tiger II Tanks
German Army and Waffen-SS Normandy Campaign 1944

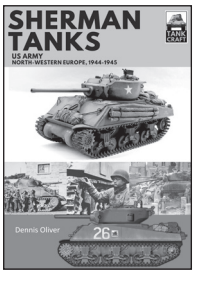
Jagdpanzer IV: German Army and Waffen-SS Tank Destroyers
Western Front, 1944–1945

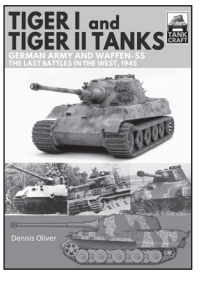
Tiger I and Tiger II Tanks
German Army and Waffen-SS The Last Battles in the East, 1945

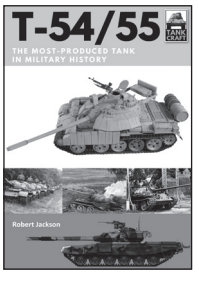
Panther Medium Tank
IV. SS-Panzerkorps Eastern Front, 1944

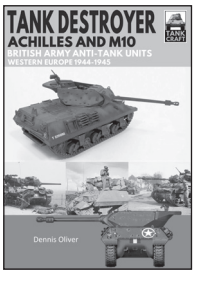
Hetzer – Jagdpanzer 38 Tank Destroyer
German Army and Waffen-SS Western Front, 1944–1945

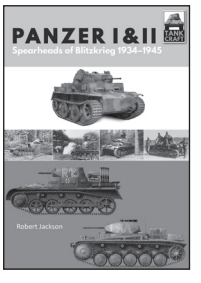












A wide range of kits and accessories attests to the long-standing popularity of these military vehicles as modelling subjects, while significant differences between different variants offers opportunities to 'individualize' models, as is so well illustrated in these books by many archive and modern photographs.